READINGS IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

HANES & McCOY

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"The Strange Interlude"

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READINGS IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

BY ERNEST HANES AND
MARTHA JANE McCOY

READINGS IN LITERATURE—in two volumes
Volume One—Drama, Epic Poetry
Volume Two—Essay, Lyric Poetry

MANUAL TO ACCOMPANY READINGS IN LITERATURE

READINGS IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE—in one volume
Fiction—Essay—Poetry—Drama

MANUAL TO ACCOMPANY READINGS IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

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BY

ERNEST HANES

AND

MARTHA JANE McCOY

FORMERLY INSTRUCTORS IN ENGLISH
THE UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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PREFACE

Now that teachers of English seem well agreed that great literature did not cease to be produced with the passing of the last century, there is a constant demand for selections from contemporary writers which are suitable for use in high schools. To meet this demand many books have been offered recently. These consist of collections of contemporary poetry, texts of contemporary essays, volumes devoted to contemporary drama, and annual anthologies of the best short stories. Many of these are excellent collections and of great value in high school libraries and classrooms. Most teachers, however, feel the need of a book which will include specimens of contemporary literature of all types within one volume, a book which may serve as a text or as a nucleus of the reading for a course in contemporary literature. The compilers of *Readings in Contemporary Literature* have constructed the present volume to meet their own need in this respect and offer it to the teaching public in the hope that it may answer the requirement of other teachers in similar situations.

The content of *Readings in Contemporary Literature*, like that of the *Readings in Literature* compiled lately by the same editors, is the result of classroom practice. The selections incorporated are those which the editors have found useful in introducing high school pupils to the contemporary literary field. They have been introduced to the classroom by pupils or have received frequent favorable comment in the pupils' reports.

The organization—the order—of this material is likewise determined by classroom practice that has been acknowledged successful. It is the outgrowth of the general principles which actuate all of the teaching of literature in the school where the editors are at present engaged.

In the laboratory schools of the University of Chicago, literature is offered to children as a means of recreation, and of enrichment of experience and hence of personality through recognition of the literary product as an artist's interpretive presentation of life. An attempt is made to lead the children to find the joy of reading and of reliving literature and to help them grow into adult experiences offered by the printed page. From these two kinds of contact with good literature, whether classic or too recent to have been proved, the pupils formulate their individual tastes and discover the principles underlying them.

Fuller exposition of the principles and methods already successfully employed in teaching the content of this volume to high school seniors will be found in the *Manual to Readings in Contemporary Literature* published simultaneously with it. Therein is a descriptive outline of procedures in which *Readings in Contemporary Literature* becomes the core of a course in contemporary literature sufficient to fill a school year. As an examination of the *Manual to Read-*

ings in Contemporary Literature will reveal, the content adapts itself most readily to presentation by units. Of these there are five; to wit, Fiction, Poetry, Essay, Drama, and Magazine. In connection with discussions of each of these in this volume, will be found stimulating study helps and lists of books with which to enrich the classroom tables. There is included for the study of the magazine a list of good periodicals for study and an outline to be employed in their analysis. The teacher is referred to the *Manual* for fuller suggestions as to method. With compression, dividing the time allotted to any unit by two, the book and the course it presupposes could be taught within the time limit of a semester.

The volume is used by its editors with senior students. Following two or three years of guided reading experience, the children receive more intensive interpretative instruction in four types of classic literature. After this course, which furnishes examples of literature of tested quality and out of which criteria of judgment may be initiated, the pupils explore the literature of their own time and cultivate to greater surety their standards of critical judgment.

Some teachers, however, prefer to lead children to an appreciation of classics through the more familiar field of contemporary writing. For that purpose this volume will serve equally well. There is much to be said on both sides of the question of order. The editors of this volume prefer to leave most contemporary literature for presentation late in the curriculum, because of its frequently frank analysis of problems of highly sophisticated life. To the consideration of this content pupils need to bring the stability of increasing maturity and the wisdom of the classics.

Readings in Contemporary Literature is, therefore, offered by its editors to others in high school teaching, in the hope and the belief that it may make easier and happier their task in guiding children through the store of current literary art and enrich the return by heightened literary appreciation on the part of their pupils.

The editors acknowledge with gratitude the continued inspiration and vision they have drawn from Professor Henry Clinton Morrison, Superintendent of the Laboratory Schools. They appreciate deeply the kindly encouragement of their colleagues, Professor Rollo La Verne Lyman and Mr. William Claude Reavis, of the College of Education of the University. To Miss Hannah Logasa of the University High School they remain indebted for invaluable assistance in the preparation of booklists and bibliographies.

ERNEST HANES
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FICTION

READINGS IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

THE SIRE DE MALÉTROIT'S DOOR

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Denis de Beaulieu was not yet two-and-twenty, but he counted himself a grown man, and a very accomplished cavalier into the bargain. Lads were early formed in that rough, warfaring epoch; and when one has been in a pitched battle and a dozen raids, has killed one's man in an honorable fashion, and knows a thing or two of strategy and mankind, a certain swagger in the gait is surely to be pardoned. He had put up his horse with due care, and supped with due deliberation; and then, in a very agreeable frame of mind, went out to pay a visit in the gray of the evening. It was not a very wise proceeding on the young man's part. He would have done better to remain beside the fire or go decently to bed. For the town was full of the troops of Burgundy and England under a mixed command; and though Denis was there on safe-conduct, his safe-conduct was like to serve him little on a chance encounter.

It was September, 1429; the weather had fallen sharp; a flighty piping wind, laden with showers, beat about the township; and the dead leaves ran riot along the streets. Here and there a window was already lighted up; and the noise of men-at-arms making merry over supper within, came forth in fits and was swallowed up and carried away by the wind. The night fell swiftly; the flag of England, fluttering on the spire-top, grew ever fainter and fainter against the flying clouds—a black speck like a swallow in the tumultuous, leaden chaos of the sky. As the night fell the wind rose, and began to hoot under archways and roar amid the tree-tops in the valley below the town.

Denis de Beaulieu walked fast and was soon knocking at his friend's door; but though he promised himself to stay only a little while and make an early return, his welcome was so pleasant, and he found so much to delay him, that it was already long past midnight before he said good-bye upon the threshold. The wind had fallen again in the meanwhile; the night was as black as the grave; not a star, nor a glimmer of moonshine, slipped through the canopy of cloud. Denis was ill-acquainted with the intricate lanes of Chateau Landon; even by daylight he had found some trouble in picking his way; and in this absolute darkness he soon lost it altogether. He was certain of one thing only—to keep mounting the hill; for his friend's house lay at the lower end, or tail, of Chateau Landon, while the inn was up at the head, under the great church spire. With this clue to go upon he stumbled and groped

forward, now breathing more freely in open places where there was a good slice of sky overhead, now feeling along the wall in stifling closes. It is an eerie and mysterious position to be thus submerged in opaque blackness in an almost unknown town. The silence is terrifying in its possibilities. The touch of cold window bars to the exploring hand startles the man like the touch of a toad; the inequalities of the pavement shake his heart into his mouth; a piece of denser darkness threatens an ambuscade or a chasm in the pathway; and where the air is brighter, the houses put on strange and bewildering appearances, as if to lead him farther from his way. For Denis, who had to regain his inn without attracting notice, there was real danger as well as mere discomfort in the walk; and he went warily and boldly at once, and at every corner paused to make an observation.

He had been for some time threading a lane so narrow that he could touch a wall with either hand when it began to open out and go sharply downward. Plainly this lay no longer in the direction of his inn; but the hope of a little more light tempted him forward to reconnoitre. The lane ended in a terrace with a bartizan wall, which gave an outlook between high houses, as out of an embrasure, into the valley lying dark and formless several hundred feet below. Denis looked down, and could discern a few tree-tops waving and a single speck of brightness where the river ran across a weir. The weather was clearing up, and the sky had lightened, so as to show the outline of the heavier clouds and the dark margin of the hills. By the uncertain glimmer, the house on his left hand should be a place of some pretensions; it was surmounted by several pinnacles and turret-tops; the round stern of a chapel, with a fringe of flying buttresses, projected boldly from the main block; and the door was sheltered under a deep porch carved with figures and overhung by two long gargoyles. The windows of the chapel gleamed through their intricate tracery with a light as of many tapers, and threw out the buttresses and the peaked roof in a more intense blackness against the sky. It was plainly the hotel of some great family of the neighborhood; and as it reminded Denis of a town house of his own at Bourges, he stood for some time gazing up at it and mentally gauging the skill of the architects and the consideration of the two families.

There seemed to be no issue to the terrace but the lane by which he had reached it; he could only retrace his steps, but he had gained some notion of his whereabouts, and hoped by this means to hit the main thoroughfare and speedily regain the inn. He was reckoning without that chapter of accidents which was to make this night memorable above all others in his career; for he had not gone back above a hundred yards before he saw a light coming to meet him, and heard loud voices speaking together in the echoing narrows of the lane. It was a party of men-at-arms going the night round with torches. Denis assured himself that they had all been making free with the wine-bowl, and were in no mood to be particular

about safe-conducts or the niceties of chivalrous war. It was as like as not that they would kill him like a dog and leave him where he fell. The situation was inspiriting but nervous. Their own torches would conceal him from sight, he reflected; and he hoped that they would drown the noise of his footsteps with their own empty voices. If he were but fleet and silent, he might evade their notice altogether.

Unfortunately, as he turned to beat a retreat, his foot rolled upon a pebble; he fell against the wall with an ejaculation, and his sword rang loudly on the stones. Two or three voices demanded who went there—some in French, some in English; but Denis made no reply, and ran the faster down the lane. Once upon the terrace, he paused to look back. They still kept calling after him, and just then began to double the pace in pursuit, with a considerable clank of armor, and great tossing of the torchlight to and fro in the narrow jaws of the passage.

Denis cast a look around and darted into the porch. There he might escape observation, or—if that were too much to expect—was in a capital posture whether for parley or defence. So thinking, he drew his sword and tried to set his back against the door. To his surprise, it yielded behind his weight; and though he turned in a moment, continued to swing back on oiled and noiseless hinges, until it stood wide open on a black interior. When things fall out opportunely for the person concerned, he is not apt to be critical about the how or why, his own immediate personal convenience seeming a sufficient reason for the strangest oddities and revolutions in our sublunary things; and so Denis, without a moment's hesitation, stepped within and partly closed the door behind him to conceal his place of refuge. Nothing was further from his thoughts than to close it altogether; but for some inexplicable reason—perhaps by a spring or a weight—the ponderous mass of oak whipped itself out of his fingers and clanked to, with a formidable rumble and a noise like the falling of an automatic bar.

The round, at that very moment, debouched upon the terrace and proceeded to summon him with shouts and curses. He heard them ferreting in the dark corners; the stock of a lance even rattled along the outer surface of the door behind which he stood; but these gentlemen were in too high a humor to be long delayed, and soon made off down a corkscrew pathway which had escaped Denis's observation, and passed out of sight and hearing along the battlements of the town.

Denis breathed again. He gave them a few minutes' grace for fear of accidents, and then groped about for some means of opening the door and slipping forth again. The inner surface was quite smooth, not a handle, not a moulding, not a projection of any sort. He got his finger nails round the edges and pulled, but the mass was immovable. He shook it, it was as firm as a rock. Denis de Beaulieu frowned and gave vent to a little noiseless whistle. What ailed the door? he wondered. Why was it open? How came it to shut so easily and so effectually after him?

There was something obscure and underhand about all this, that was little to the young man's fancy. It looked like a snare, and yet who could suppose a snare in such a quiet by-street and in a house of so prosperous and even noble an exterior? And yet —snare or no snare, intentionally or unintentionally—here he was, prettily trapped; and for the life of him he could see no way out of it again. The darkness began to weigh upon him. He gave ear; all was silent without, but within and close by he seemed to catch a faint sighing, a faint sobbing rustle, a little stealthy creak—as though many persons were at his side, holding themselves quite still, and governing even their respiration with the extreme of slyness. The idea went to his vitals with a shock, and he faced about suddenly as if to defend his life. Then, for the first time, he became aware of a light about the level of his eyes and at some distance in the interior of the house—a vertical thread of light, widening towards the bottom, such as might escape between two wings of arras over a doorway. To see anything was a relief to Denis; it was like a piece of solid ground to a man laboring in a morass; his mind seized upon it with avidity; and he stood staring at it and trying to piece together some logical conception of his surroundings. Plainly there was a flight of steps ascending from his own level to that of this illuminated doorway; and indeed he thought he could make out another thread of light, as fine as a needle and as faint as phosphorescence, which might very well be reflected along the polished wood of a handrail. Since he had begun to suspect that he was not alone, his heart had continued to beat with smothering violence, and an intolerable desire for action of any sort had possessed itself of his spirit. He was in deadly peril, he believed. What could be more natural than to mount the staircase, lift the curtain, and confront his difficulty at once? At least he would be dealing with something tangible; at least he would be no longer in the dark. He stepped slowly forward with outstretched hand, until his foot struck the bottom step; then he rapidly scaled the stairs, stood for a moment to compose his expression, lifted the arras and went in.

He found himself in a large apartment of polished stone. There were three doors; one on each of three sides; all similarly curtained with tapestry. The fourth side was occupied by two large windows and a great stone chimney-piece, carved with the arms of the Malétroits. Denis recognized the bearings, and was gratified to find himself in such good hands. The room was strongly illuminated; but it contained little furniture except a heavy table and a chair or two, the hearth was innocent of fire, and the pavement was but sparsely strewn with rushes clearly many days old.

On a high chair beside the chimney, and directly facing Denis as he entered, sat a little old gentleman in a fur tippet. He sat with his legs crossed and his hands folded, and a cup of spiced wine stood by his elbow on a bracket on the wall. His countenance had a strongly masculine

cast; not properly human, but such as we see in the bull, the goat, or the domestic boar; something equivocal and wheedling, something greedy, brutal, and dangerous. The upper lip was inordinately full, as though swollen by a blow or a toothache; and the smile, the peaked eyebrows, and the small, strong eyes were quaintly and almost comically evil in expression. Beautiful white hair hung straight all round his head, like a saint's, and fell in a single curl upon the tippet. His beard and moustache were the pink of venerable sweetness. Age, probably in consequence of inordinate precautions, had left no mark upon his hands; and the Malétroit hand was famous. It would be difficult to imagine anything at once so fleshy and so delicate in design; the taper, sensual fingers were like those of one of Leonardo's women; the fork of the thumb made a dimpled protuberance when closed; the nails were perfectly shaped, and of a dead, surprising whiteness. It rendered his aspect tenfold more redoubtable, that a man with hands like these should keep them devoutly folded like a virgin martyr—that a man with so intent and startling an expression of face should sit patiently on his seat and contemplate people with an unwinking stare, like a god, or a god's statue. His quiescence seemed ironical and treacherous, it fitted so poorly with his looks.

Such was Alain, Sire de Malétroit.

Denis and he looked silently at each other for a second or two.

"Pray step in," said the Sire de Malétroit. "I have been expecting you all the evening."

He had not risen but he accompanied his words with a smile and a slight but courteous inclination of the head. Partly from the smile, partly from the strange musical murmur with which the Sire prefaced his observation, Denis felt a strong shudder of disgust go through his marrow. And what with disgust and honest confusion of mind, he could scarcely get words together in reply.

"I fear," he said, "that this is a double accident. I am not the person you suppose me. It seems you were looking for a visit; but for my part, nothing was further from my thoughts —nothing could be more contrary to my wishes—than this intrusion."

"Well, well," replied the old gentleman indulgently, "here you are, which is the main point. Seat yourself, my friend, and put yourself entirely at your ease. We shall arrange our little affairs presently."

Denis perceived that the matter was still complicated with some misconception, and he hastened to continue his explanations.

"Your door . . . ." he began.

"About my door?" asked the other raising his peaked eyebrows. "A little piece of ingenuity." And he shrugged his shoulders. "A hospitable fancy! By your own account, you were not desirous of making my acquaintance. We old people look for such reluctance now and then; when it touches our honor, we cast about until we find some way of overcoming it. You arrive uninvited, but believe me, very welcome."

"You persist in error, sir," said Denis. "There can be no question between you and me. I am a stranger in

this countryside. My name is Denis, damoiseau de Beaulieu. If you see me in your house, it is only——"

"My young friend," interrupted the other, "you will permit me to have my own ideas on that subject. They probably differ from yours at the present moment," he added with a leer, "but time will show which of us is in the right."

Denis was convinced he had to do with a lunatic. He seated himself with a shrug, content to wait the upshot; and a pause ensued, during which he thought he could distinguish a hurried gabbling as of prayer from behind the arras immediately opposite him. Sometimes there seemed to be but one person engaged, sometimes two; and the vehemence of the voice, low as it was, seemed to indicate either great haste or an agony of spirit. It occurred to him that this piece of tapestry covered the entrance to the chapel he had noticed from without.

The old gentleman meanwhile surveyed Denis from head to foot with a smile, and from time to time emitted little noises like a bird or a mouse, which seemed to indicate a high degree of satisfaction. This state of matters became rapidly insupportable; and Denis, to put an end to it, remarked politely that the wind had gone down.

The old gentleman fell into a fit of silent laughter, so prolonged and violent that he became quite red in the face. Denis got upon his feet at once, and put on his hat with a flourish.

"Sir," he said, "if you are in your wits, you have affronted me grossly. If you are out of them, I flatter myself I can find better employment for my brains than to talk with lunatics. My conscience is clear; you have made a fool of me from the first moment; you have refused to hear my explanations; and now there is no power under God will make me stay here any longer; and if I cannot make my way out in a more decent fashion, I will hack your door in pieces with my sword."

The Sire de Malétroit raised his right hand and wagged it at Denis with the fore and little fingers extended.

"My dear nephew," he said, "sit down."

"Nephew!" retorted Denis, "you lie in your throat;" and he snapped his fingers in his face.

"Sit down, you rogue!" cried the old gentleman, in a sudden, harsh voice, like the barking of a dog. "Do you fancy," he went on, "that when I had made my little contrivance for the door I had stopped short with that? If you prefer to be bound hand and foot till your bones ache, rise and try to go away. If you choose to remain a free young buck, agreeably conversing with an old gentleman—why, sit where you are in peace, and God be with you."

"Do you mean I am a prisoner?" demanded Denis.

"I state the facts," replied the other. "I would rather leave the conclusion to yourself."

Denis sat down again. Externally he managed to keep pretty calm, but within, he was now boiling with anger, now chilled with apprehension. He no longer felt convinced that he was

dealing with a madman. And if the old gentleman was sane, what, in God's name, had he to look for? What absurd or tragical adventure had befallen him? What countenance was he to assume?

While he was thus unpleasantly reflecting, the arras that overhung the chapel door was raised, and a tall priest in his robes came forth and, giving a long, keen stare at Denis, said something in an undertone to Sire de Malétroit.

"She is in a better frame of spirit?" asked the latter.

"She is more resigned, messire," replied the priest.

"Now the Lord help her, she is hard to please!" sneered the old gentleman. "A likely stripling—not ill-born—and of her own choosing, too? Why, what more would the jade have?"

"The situation is not usual for a young damsel," said the other, "and somewhat trying to her blushes."

"She should have thought of that before she began the dance? It was none of my choosing, God knows that; but since she is in it, by our lady, she shall carry it to the end." And then addressing Denis, "Monsieur de Beaulieu," he asked, "may I present you to my niece? She has been waiting your arrival, I may say, with even greater impatience than myself."

Denis had resigned himself with a good grace—all he desired was to know the worst of it as speedily as possible; so he rose at once, and bowed in acquiescence. The Sire de Malétroit followed his example and limped, with the assistance of the chaplain's arm, towards the chapel-door. The priest pulled aside the arras, and all three entered. The building had considerable architectural pretensions. A light groining sprang from six stout columns, and hung down in two rich pendants from the centre of the vault. The place terminated behind the altar in a round end, embossed and honeycombed with a superfluity of ornament in relief, and pierced by many little windows shaped like stars, trefoils, or wheels. These windows were imperfectly glazed, so that the night air circulated freely in the chapel. The tapers, of which there must have been half a hundred burning on the altar, were unmercifully blown about; and the light went through many different phases of brilliancy and semi-eclipse. On the steps in front of the altar knelt a young girl richly attired as a bride. A chill settled over Denis as he observed her costume; he fought with desperate energy against the conclusion that was being thrust upon his mind; it could not—it should not—be as he feared.

"Blanche," said the Sire, in his most flute-like tones, "I have brought a friend to see you, my little girl; turn round and give him your pretty hand. It is good to be devout; but it is necessary to be polite, my niece."

The girl rose to her feet and turned toward the new comers. She moved all of a piece; and shame and exhaustion were expressed in every line of her fresh young body; and she held her head down and kept her eyes upon the pavement, as she came slowly forward. In the course of her advance, her eyes fell upon Denis de

Beaulieu's feet—feet of which he was justly vain, be it remarked, and wore in the most elegant accoutrement even while traveling. She paused—started, as if his yellow boots had conveyed some shocking meaning—and glanced suddenly up into the wearer's countenance. Their eyes met; shame gave place to horror and terror in her looks; the blood left her lips; with a piercing scream she covered her face with her hands and sank upon the chapel floor.

"That is not the man!" she cried. "My uncle, that is not the man!"

The Sire de Malétroit chirped agreeably. "Of course not," he said, "I expected as much. It was so unfortunate you could not remember his name."

"Indeed," she cried, "indeed, I have never seen this person till this moment—I have never so much as set eyes upon him—I never wish to see him again. Sir," she said, turning to Denis, "if you are a gentleman, you will bear me out. Have I ever seen you—have you ever seen me—before this accursed hour?"

"To speak for myself, I have never had that pleasure," answered the young man. "This is the first time, messire, that I have met with your engaging niece."

The old gentleman shrugged his shoulders.

"I am distressed to hear it," he said. "But it is never too late to begin. I had little more acquaintance with my own late lady ere I married her; which proves," he added, with a grimace, "that these impromptu marriages may often produce an excellent understanding in the long run. As the bridegroom is to have a voice in the matter, I will give him two hours to make up for lost time before we proceed with the ceremony." And he turned toward the door, followed by the clergyman.

The girl was on her feet in a moment. "My uncle, you cannot be in earnest," she said. "I declare before God I will stab myself rather than be forced on that young man. The heart rises at it; God forbids such marriages; you dishonor your white hair. Oh, my uncle, pity me! There is not a woman in all the world but would prefer death to such a nuptial. Is it possible," she added, faltering—"is it possible that you do not believe me—that you still think this"—and she pointed at Denis with a tremor of anger and contempt—"that you still think *this* to be the man?"

"Frankly," said the old gentleman, pausing on the threshold, "I do. But let me explain to you once for all, Blanche de Malétroit, my way of thinking about this affair. When you took it into your head to dishonor my family and the name that I have borne, in peace and war, for more than three-score years, you forfeited, not only the right to question my designs, but that of looking me in the face. If your father had been alive, he would have spat on you and turned you out of doors. His was the hand of iron. You may bless your God you have only to deal with the hand of velvet, mademoiselle. It was my duty to get you married without delay. Out of pure good-will, I have tried to find your own gallant for you. And I believe I have succeeded. But before God and all the holy angels,

Blanche de Malétroit, if I have not, I care not one jack straw. So let me recommend you to be polite to our young friend; for upon my word, your next groom may be less appetizing."

And with that he went out, with the chaplain at his heels; and the arras fell behind the pair.

The girl turned upon Denis with flashing eyes.

"And what, sir," she demanded, "may be the meaning of all this?"

"God knows," returned Denis, gloomily. "I am a prisoner in this house, which seems full of mad people. More I know not; and nothing do I understand."

"And pray how came you here," she asked.

He told her as briefly as he could. "For the rest," he added, "perhaps you will follow my example, and tell me the answer to all these riddles, and what, in God's name, is like to be the end of it."

She stood silent for a little, and he could see her lips tremble and her tearless eyes burn with a feverish lustre. Then she pressed her forehead in both hands.

"Alas, how my head aches!" she said wearily—"to say nothing of my poor heart! But it is due to you to know my story, unmaidenly as it must seem. I am called Blanche de Malétroit; I have been without father or mother for—oh! for as long as I can recollect, and indeed I have been most unhappy all my life. Three months ago a young captain began to stand near me every day in church. I could see that I pleased him; I am much to blame, but I was so glad that anyone should love me; and when he passed me a letter, I took it home with me and read it with great pleasure. Since that time he has written many. He was so anxious to speak with me, poor fellow! and kept asking me to leave the door open some evening that we might have two words upon the stair. For he knew how much my uncle trusted me." She gave something like a sob at that, and it was a moment before she could go on. "My uncle is a hard man, but he is very shrewd," she said at last. "He has performed many feats in war, and was a great person at court, and much trusted by Queen Isabeau in old days. How he came to suspect me I cannot tell; but it is hard to keep anything from his knowledge; and this morning, as we came from mass, he took my hand into his, forced it open, and read my little billet, walking by my side all the while. When he finished, he gave it back to me with great politeness. It contained another request to have the door left open; and this has been the ruin of us all. My uncle kept me strictly in my room until evening, and then ordered me to dress myself as you see me—a hard mockery for a young girl, do you not think so? I suppose, when he could not prevail with me to tell him the young captain's name, he must have laid a trap for him: into which, alas! you have fallen in the anger of God. I looked for much confusion; for how could I tell whether he was willing to take me for his wife on these sharp terms? He might have been trifling with me from the first; or I might have made myself too cheap in his eyes. But truly I had not looked for

such a shameful punishment as this! I could not think that God would let a girl be so disgraced before a young man. And now I tell you all; and I can scarcely hope that you will not despise me."

Denis made her a respectful inclination.

"Madam," he said, "you have honored me by your confidence. It remains for me to prove that I am not unworthy of the honor. Is Messire de Malétroit at hand?"

"I believe he is writing in the salle without," she answered.

"May I lead you, thither, madam?" asked Denis, offering his hand with his most courtly bearing.

She accepted it; and the pair passed out of the chapel, Blanche in a very drooping and shamefast condition, but Denis strutting and ruffling in the consciousness of a mission, and the boyish certainty of accomplishing it with honor.

The Sire de Malétroit rose to meet them with an ironical obeisance.

"Sir," said Denis, with the grandest possible air, "I believe I am to have some say in the matter of this marriage; and let me tell you at once, I will be no party to forcing the inclination of this young lady. Had it been freely offered to me, I should have been proud to accept her hand, for I perceive she is as good as she is beautiful; but as things are, I have now the honor, messire, of refusing."

Blanche looked at him with gratitude in her eyes; but the old gentleman only smiled and smiled, until his smile grew positively sickening to Denis.

"I am afraid," he said, "Monsieur de Beaulieu, that you do not perfectly understand the choice I have offered you. Follow me, I beseech you, to this window." And he led the way to one of the large windows which stood open on the night. "You observe," he went on, "there is an iron ring in the upper masonry, and reeved through that, a very efficacious rope. Now, mark my words: if you should find your disinclination to my niece's person insurmountable, I shall have you hanged out of this window before sunrise. I shall only proceed to such an extremity with the greatest regret, you may believe me. For it is not at all your death that I desire, but my niece's establishment in life. At the same time, it must come to that if you prove obstinate. Your family, Monsieur de Beaulieu, is very well in its way; but if you sprang from Charlemagne, you should not refuse the hand of a Malétroit with impunity—not if she had been as common as the Paris road—not if she were as hideous as the gargoyle over my door. Neither my niece nor you, nor my own private feelings, move me at all in this matter. The honor of my house has been compromised; I believe you to be the guilty person, at least you are now in the secret; and you can hardly wonder if I request you to wipe out the stain. If you will not, your blood be on your own head! It will be no great satisfaction to me to have your interesting relics kicking their heels in the breeze below my windows, but half a loaf is better than no bread, and if I cannot cure the dishonor, I shall at least stop the scandal."

There was a pause.

"I believe there are other ways of settling such imbroglios among gentlemen," said Denis. "You wear a sword, and I hear you have used it with distinction."

The Sire de Malétroit made a signal to the chaplain, who crossed the room with long silent strides and raised the arras over the third of the three doors. It was only a moment before he let it fall again; but Denis had time to see a dusky passage full of armed men.

"When I was a little younger, I should have been delighted to honor you, Monsieur de Beaulieu," said Sire Alain; "but I am now too old. Faithful retainers are the sinews of age, and I must employ the strength I have. This is one of the hardest things to swallow as a man grows up in years; but with a little patience, even this becomes habitual. You and the lady seem to prefer the salle for what remains of your two hours; and as I have no desire to cross your preference, I shall resign it to your use with all the pleasure in the world. No haste!" he added, holding up his hand, as he saw a dangerous look come into Denis de Beaulieu's face. "If your mind revolt against hanging, it will be time enough two hours hence to throw yourself out of the window or upon the pikes of my retainers. Two hours of life are always two hours. A great many things may turn up in even as little a while as that. And, besides, if I understand her appearance, my niece has something to say to you. You will not disfigure your last hours by a want of politeness to a lady?"

Denis looked at Blanche, and she made him an imploring gesture.

It is likely that the old gentleman was hugely pleased at this symptom of an understanding; for he smiled on both, and added sweetly: "If you will give me your word of honor, Monsieur de Beaulieu, to await my return at the end of the two hours before attempting anything desperate, I shall withdraw my retainers, and let you speak in greater privacy with mademoiselle."

Denis again glanced at the girl, who seemed to beseech him to agree.

"I give you my word of honor," he said.

Messire de Malétroit bowed, and proceeded to limp about the apartment, clearing his throat the while with that odd musical chirp which had already grown so irritating in the ears of Denis de Beaulieu. He first possessed himself of some papers which lay upon the table; then he went to the mouth of the passage and appeared to give an order to the men behind the arras; and lastly he hobbled out through the door by which Denis had come in, turning upon the threshold to address a last smiling bow to the young couple, and followed by the chaplain with a hand-lamp.

No sooner were they alone than Blanche advanced towards Denis with her hands extended. Her face was flushed and excited, and her eyes shone with tears.

"You shall not die!" she cried, "you shall marry me after all."

"You seem to think, madam," replied Denis, "that I stand much in fear of death."

"Oh, no, no," she said, "I see you are no poltroon. It is for my own sake—I could not bear to have you slain for such a scruple."

"I am afraid," returned Denis, "that you underrate the difficulty, madam. What you may be too generous to refuse, I may be too proud to accept. In a moment of noble feeling towards me, you forgot what you perhaps owe to others."

He had the decency to keep his eyes on the floor as he said this, and after he had finished, so as not to spy upon her confusion. She stood silent for a moment, then walked suddenly away, and falling on her uncle's chair, fairly burst out sobbing. Denis was in the acme of embarrassment. He looked round, as if to seek for inspiration, and seeing a stool, plumped down upon it for something to do. There he sat playing with the guard of his rapier, and wishing himself dead a thousand times over, and buried in the nastiest kitchen-heap in France. His eyes wandered round the apartment, but found nothing to arrest them. There were such wide spaces between the furniture, the light fell so badly and cheerlessly over all, the dark outside air looked in so coldly through the windows, that he thought he had never seen a church so vast, nor a tomb so melancholy. The regular sobs of Blanche de Malétroit measured out the time like the ticking of a clock. He read the device upon the shield over and over again, until his eyes became obscured; he stared into shadowy corners until he imagined they were swarming with horrible animals; and every now and again he awoke with a start, to remember that his last two hours were running, and death was on the march.

Oftener and oftener, as the time went on, did his glance settle on the girl herself. Her face was bowed forward and covered with her hands, and she was shaken at intervals by the convulsive hiccup of grief. Even thus she was not an unpleasant object to dwell upon, so plump and yet so fine, with a warm brown skin, and the most beautiful hair, Denis thought, in the whole world of womankind. Her hands were like her uncle's; but they were more in place at the end of her young arms, and looked infinitely soft and caressing. He remembered how her blue eyes had shone upon him, full of anger, pity, and innocence. And the more he dwelt on her perfections, the uglier death looked, and the more deeply was he smitten with penitence at her continued tears. Now he felt that no man could have the courage to leave a world which contained so beautiful a creature; and now he would have given forty minutes of his last hour to have unsaid his cruel speech.

Suddenly a hoarse and ragged peal of cockcrow rose to their ears from the dark valley below the windows. And this shattering noise in the silence of all around was like a light in a dark place, and shook them both out of their reflections.

"Alas, can I do nothing to help you?" she said, looking up.

"Madam," replied Denis with a fine irrelevancy, "if I have said anything to wound you, believe me, it was for your own sake and not for mine."

She thanked him with a tearful look.

"I feel your position cruelly," he went on. "The world has been bitter hard on you. Your uncle is a disgrace to mankind. Believe me, madam, there is no young gentleman in all France but would be glad of my opportunity, to die in doing you a momentary service."

"I know already that you can be very brave and generous," she answered. "What I *want* to know is whether I can serve you—now or afterwards," she added, with a quaver.

"Most certainly," he answered with a smile. "Let me sit beside you as if I were a friend, instead of a foolish intruder; try to forget how awkwardly we are placed to one another; make my last moments go pleasantly; and you will do me the chief service possible."

"You are very gallant," she added, with a yet deeper sadness . . . . "very gallant . . . . and it somehow pains me. But draw nearer, if you please; and if you find anything to say to me, you will at least make certain of a very friendly listener. Ah! Monsieur de Beaulieu," she broke forth—"ah! Monsieur de Beaulieu, how can I look you in the face?" And she fell to weeping again with a renewed effusion.

"Madam," said Denis, taking her hand in both of his, "reflect on the little time I have before me, and the great bitterness into which I am cast by the sight of your distress. Spare me, in my last moments, the spectacle of what I cannot cure even with the sacrifice of my life."

"I am very selfish," answered Blanche. "I will be braver, Monsieur de Beaulieu, for your sake. But think if I can do you no kindness in the future—if you have no friends to whom I could carry your adieux. Charge me as heavily as you can; every burden will lighten, by so little, the invaluable gratitude I owe you. Put it in my power to do something more for you than weep."

"My mother is married again, and has a young family to care for. My brother Guichard will inherit my fiefs; and if I am not in error, that will content him amply for my death. Life is a little vapor that passeth away, as we are told by those in holy orders. When a man is in a fair way and sees all life open in front of him, he seems to himself to make a very important figure in the world. His horse whinnies to him; the trumpets blow and the girls look out of windows as he rides into town before his company; he receives many assurances of trust and regard—sometimes by express in a letter—sometimes face to face, with persons of great consequence falling on his neck. It is not wonderful if his head is turned for a time. But once he is dead, were he as brave as Hercules or as wise as Solomon, he is soon forgotten. It is not ten years since my father fell, with many other knights around him, in a very fierce encounter, and I do not think that any one of them, nor so much as the name of the fight, is now remembered. No, no, madam, the nearer you come to it, you see that death is a dark and dusty corner, where a man gets into his tomb and has the door shut after him till the judgment day. I have few friends just now, and once I am dead I shall have none."

"Ah, Monsieur de Beaulieu!" she exclaimed, "you forget Blanche de Malétroit."

"You have a sweet nature, madam, and you are pleased to estimate a little service far beyond its worth."

"It is not that," she answered. "You mistake me if you think I am easily touched by my own concerns. I say so, because you are the noblest man I have ever met; because I recognize in you a spirit that would have made even a common person famous in the land."

"And yet here I die in a mouse-trap —with no more noise about it than my own squeaking," answered he.

A look of pain crossed her face, and she was silent for a little while. Then a light came into her eyes, and with a smile she spoke again.

"I cannot have my champion think meanly of himself. Anyone who gives his life for another will be met in Paradise by all the heralds and angels of the Lord God. And you have no such cause to hang your head. For . . . . Pray, do you think me beautiful?" she asked, with a deep flush.

"Indeed, madam, I do," he said.

"I am glad of that," she answered heartily. "Do you think there are many men in France who have been asked in marriage by a beautiful maiden—with her own lips—and who have refused her to her face? I know you men would half despise such a triumph; but believe me, we women know more of what is precious in love. There is nothing that should set a person higher in his own esteem; and we women would prize nothing more dearly."

"You are very good," he said; "but you cannot make me forget that I was asked in pity and not for love."

"I am not so sure of that," she replied, holding down her head. "Hear me to an end, Monsieur de Beaulieu. I know how you must despise me; I feel you are right to do so; I am too poor a creature to occupy one thought of your mind, although, alas! you must die for me this morning. But when I asked you to marry me, indeed, and indeed, it was because I respected and admired you, and loved you with my whole soul, from the very moment that you took my part against my uncle. If you had seen yourself, and how noble you looked, you would pity rather than despise me. And now," she went on, hurriedly checking him with her hand, "although I have laid aside all reserve and told you so much, remember that I know your sentiments towards me already. I would not, believe me, being nobly born, weary you with importunities into consent. I too have a pride of my own: and I declare before the holy mother of God, if you should now go back from your word already given, I would no more marry you than I would marry my uncle's groom."

Denis smiled a little bitterly.

"It is a small love," he said, "that shies at a little pride."

She made no answer, although she probably had her own thoughts.

"Come hither to the window," he said with a sigh. "Here is the dawn."

And indeed the dawn was already beginning. The hollow of the sky was full of essential daylight, colorless and clean; and the valley underneath

was flooded with a gray reflection. A few thin vapors clung in the coves of the forest or lay along the winding course of the river. The scene disengaged a surprising effect of stillness, which was hardly interrupted when the cocks began once more to crow among the steadings. Perhaps the same fellow who had made so horrid a clangor in the darkness not half an hour before, now sent up the merriest cheer to greet the coming day. A little wind went bustling and eddying among the tree-tops underneath the windows. And still the daylight kept flooding insensibly out of the east, which was soon to grow incandescent and cast up that red-hot cannon-ball, the rising sun.

Denis looked out over all this with a bit of a shiver. He had taken her hand, and retained it in his almost unconsciously.

"Has the day begun already?" she said; and then, illogically enough: "the night has been so long! Alas! what shall we say to my uncle when he returns?"

"What you will," said Denis, and he pressed her fingers in his.

She was silent.

"Blanche," he said, with a swift, uncertain, passionate utterance, "you have seen whether I fear death. You must know well enough that I would as gladly leap out of that window into the empty air as to lay a finger on you without your free and full consent. But if you care for me at all do not let me lose my life in a misapprehension; for I love you better than the whole world; and though I will die for you blithely, it would be like all the joys of Paradise to live on and spend my life in your service."

As he stopped speaking, a bell began to ring loudly in the interior of the house; and a clatter of armor in the corridor showed that the retainers were returning to their post, and the two hours were at an end.

"After all that you have heard?" she whispered, leaning towards him with her lips and eyes.

"I have heard nothing," he replied.

"The captain's name was Florimond de Champdivers," she said in his ear.

"I did not hear it," he answered, taking her supple body in his arms, and covered her wet face with kisses.

A melodious chirping was audible behind, followed by a beautiful chuckle, and the voice of Messire de Malétroit wished his new nephew a good morning.

THE LOST PHŒBE[1]

THEODORE DREISER

They lived together in a part of the country which was not so prosperous as it had once been, about three miles from one of those small towns that, instead of increasing in population, is steadily decreasing. The territory was not very thickly settled; perhaps a house every other mile or so, with large areas of corn- and wheat-land and fallow fields that

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at odd seasons had been sown to timothy and clover. Their particular house was part log and part frame, the log portion being the old original home of Henry's grandfather. The new portion, of now rain-beaten, time-worn slabs, through which the wind squeaked in the chinks at times, and which several overshadowing elms and a butternut-tree made picturesque and reminiscently pathetic, but a little damp, was erected by Henry when he was twenty-one and just married.

That was forty-eight years before. The furniture inside, like the house outside, was old and mildewy and reminiscent of an earlier day. You have seen the what-not of cherry wood, perhaps, with spiral legs and fluted top. It was there. The old-fashioned heavy-posted bed, with ball-like protuberances and deep curving incisions, was there also, a sadly alienated descendant of an early Jacobean ancestor. The bureau was of cherry also, high and wide and solidly built, but faded-looking, and with a musty odor. The rag carpet that underlay all these sturdy examples of enduring furniture was a weak, faded, lead-and-pink-colored affair woven by Phœbe Ann's own hands when she was fifteen years younger than she was when she died. The creaky wooden loom on which it had been done now stood like a dusty, bony skeleton, along with a broken rocking-chair, a worm-eaten clothes-press,—Heaven knows how old,—a lime-stained bench that had once been used to keep flowers on outside the door, and other decrepit factors of household utility, in an east room that was a lean-to against this so-called main portion. All sorts of broken-down furniture were about this place: an antiquated clothes-horse, cracked in two of its ribs; a broken mirror in an old cherry frame, which had fallen from a nail and cracked itself three days before their youngest son, Jerry, died; an extension hat-rack, which once had had porcelain knobs on the ends of its pegs; and a sewing-machine, long since outdone in its clumsy mechanism by rivals of a newer generation.

The orchard to the east of the house was full of gnarled old apple-trees, worm-eaten as to trunks and branches, and fully ornamented with green and white lichens, so that it had a sad, greenish-white, silvery effect in moonlight. The low out-houses, which had once housed chickens, a horse or two, a cow, and several pigs, were covered with patches of moss as to their roof, and the sides had been free of paint for so long that they were blackish gray as to color, and a little spongy. The picket-fence in front, with its gate squeaky and askew, and the side fences of the stake-and-rider type were in an equally run-down condition. As a matter of fact, they had aged synchronously with the persons who lived here, old Henry Reifsneider and his wife Phœbe Ann.

They had lived here, these two, ever since their marriage, forty-eight years before, and Henry had lived here before that from his childhood up. His father and mother, well along in years when he was a boy, had invited him to bring his wife here when he had first fallen in love

and decided to marry; and he had done so. His father and mother were the companions of him and his wife for ten years after they were married, when both died; and then Henry and Phœbe were left with their five children growing lustily apace. But all sorts of things had happened since then. Of the seven children, all told, that had been born to them, three had died; one girl had gone to Kansas; one boy had gone to Sioux Falls, and never been heard of after; another boy had gone to Washington; and the last girl lived five counties away in the same State, but was so burdened with cares of her own that she rarely gave them a thought. Time and a commonplace home life that had never been attractive had weaned them thoroughly, so that, wherever they were, they gave little thought as to how it might be with their father and mother.

Old Henry Reifsneider and his wife Phœbe were a loving couple. You perhaps know how it is with simple natures that fasten themselves like lichens on the stones of circumstance and weather their days to a crumbling conclusion. The great world sounds widely, but it has no call for them. They have no soaring intellect. The orchard, the meadow, the corn-field, the pig-pen, and the chicken-lot measure the range of their human activities. When the wheat is headed it is reaped and threshed; when the corn is browned and frosted it is cut and shocked; when the timothy is in full head it is cut, and the hay-cock erected. After that comes winter, with the hauling of grain to market, the sawing and splitting of wood, the simple chores of fire-building, meal-getting, occasional repairing, and visiting. Beyond these and the changes of weather—the snows, the rains, and the fair days—there are no immediate, significant things. All the rest of life is a far-off, clamorous phantasmagoria, flickering like Northern lights in the night, and sounding as faintly as cow-bells tinkling in the distance.

Old Henry and his wife Phœbe were as fond of each other as it is possible for old people to be who have nothing else in this life to be fond of. He was a thin old man, seventy when she died, a queer, crotchety person with coarse gray-black hair and beard, quite straggly and unkempt. He looked at you out of dull, fishy, watery eyes that had deep-brown crow's-feet at the sides. His clothes, like the clothes of many farmers, were aged and angular and baggy, standing out at the pockets, not fitting about the neck, protuberant and worn at elbow and knee. Phœbe Ann was thin and shapeless, a very umbrella of a woman, clad in shabby black, and with a black bonnet for her best wear. As time had passed, and they had only themselves to look after, their movements had become slower and slower, their activities fewer and fewer. The annual keep of pigs had been reduced from five to one grunting porker, and the single horse which Henry now retained was a sleepy animal, not over-nourished and not very clean. The chickens, of which formerly there was a large flock, had almost disappeared, owing to ferrets, foxes, and the lack of proper care, which produces disease. The

former healthy garden was now a straggling memory of itself, and the vines and flowerbeds that formerly ornamented the windows and door-yard had now become choking thickets. Yet these two lived together in peace and sympathy, only that now and then old Henry would become unduly cranky, complaining almost invariably that something had been neglected or mislaid which was of no importance at all.

"Phœbe, where's my corn-knife? You ain't never minded to let my things alone no more."

"Now you hush, Henry," his wife would caution him in a cracked and squeaky voice. "If you don't, I'll leave yuh. I'll git up and walk out of here some day, and then where would y' be? Y' ain't got anybody but me to look after yuh, so yuh just behave yourself."

Old Henry, who knew that his wife would never leave him in any circumstances, used to speculate at times as to what he would do if she were to die. That was the one leaving that he really feared. As he climbed on the chair at night to wind the old, long-pendulumed, double-weighted clock, or went finally to the front and the back door to see that they were safely shut in, it was a comfort to know that Phœbe was properly ensconced on her side of the bed, and that if he stirred restlessly in the night, she would be there to ask what he wanted.

"Now, Henry, do lie still! You're as restless as a chicken."

"Well, I can't sleep, Phœbe."

"Well, yuh needn't roll so, anyhow. You can let me sleep."

This usually reduced him to a state of somnolent ease. If she wanted a pail of water, it was a grumbling pleasure for him to get it; and if she did rise first to build the fires, he saw that the wood was cut and placed within easy reach. They divided this simple world nicely between them.

As the years had gone on, fewer and fewer people had called. They were well known for a distance of as much as ten square miles as old Mr. and Mrs. Reifsneider, honest, moderately Christian, but too old to be really interesting any longer. Now and then some old friend stopped with a pie or cake or a roasted chicken or duck, or merely to see that they were well; even these kindly minded visits were no longer frequent.

One day in the early spring of her sixty-fourth year Mrs. Reifsneider took sick, and from a low fever passed into some indefinable ailment which, because of her age, was no longer curable. Old Henry drove to Swinnerton, the neighboring town, and procured a doctor. Some friends called, and the immediate care of her was taken off his hands. Then one chill spring night she died, and old Henry, in a fog of sorrow and uncertainty, followed her body to the nearest graveyard, an unattractive space, with a few pines growing in it. It was suggested to him at once by one friend and another that he come to stay with them awhile, or that he seek his daughter in Pemberton County. She had been notified. He was so old, and so fixed in his notions, however, and so accustomed to the exact surroundings he had known all his days, that he could not think of leaving.

He wanted to remain near where they had put his Phœbe; and the fact that he would have to live alone did not trouble him in the least.

"I kin make a shift for myself," he continually announced to old Dr. Morrow, who had attended his wife in this case. "I kin cook a little, and, besides, I don't take much more'n coffee an' bread in the mornin's. I'll get along now well enough. You just let me be." And after many pleadings and proffers of advice, with supplies of coffee and bacon and baked bread duly offered and accepted, he was left to himself. For a while he sat idly outside his door brooding in the spring sun. He tried to revive his interest in farming, and to keep himself busy and free from thought by looking after the fields, which of late had been much neglected. It was a gloomy thing to come in of an evening or in the afternoon and find no shadow of Phœbe where everything suggested her. By degrees he put a few of her things away. He sat beside his lamp and read in the papers that were left him occasionally or in a Bible that he had neglected for years, but he could get little solace from these things. Mostly he held his hand over his mouth and looked at the floor as he sat and thought of what had become of her, and how soon he himself would die. He made a great business of making his coffee in the morning and frying himself a little bacon at night; but his appetite was gone. This shell in which he had been housed so long seemed vacant, and its shadows were suggestive of immedicable griefs. So he lived quite dolefully for five long weeks, and then a change began.

It was one night, after he had looked after the front and the back door, wound the clock, blown out the lamp, and gone through all the self-same motions that he had indulged in for years, that he went to bed not so much to sleep as to think. It was a moonlight night. The green-lichen-covered orchard was a silvery affair, sweetly spectral. The moon shone through the east windows, throwing the pattern of the panes on the wooden floor, and making the old furniture, to which he was accustomed, stand out dimly in the gloom. As usual he had been thinking of Phœbe and the years when they had been young together, and of the children who had gone, and the poor shift he was making of his present days. The house was coming to be in a very bad state indeed. The bed-clothes were in disorder and not clean, for he made a wretched shift of washing. It was a terror to him. He was getting into that brooding state when he would accept anything rather than exert himself. He preferred to pace slowly to and fro or to sit and think.

By twelve o'clock he was asleep, however, and by two o'clock he had waked again. The moon by this time had shifted to a position on the western side of the house, and it now shone in through the windows of the living-room and those of the kitchen beyond. A certain combination of furniture—a chair near a table, with his coat on it, the half-open kitchen door casting a shadow, and the position of a lamp near a paper—gave him an exact representation of Phœbe leaning over the table as he had often seen her do in life. He looked at her

fixedly in the feeble half-light, his old hair tingling oddly at the roots, and then he sat up. The figure did not move. He put his thin legs out of the bed and sat looking at her, wondering if this could really be Phœbe. They had talked of ghosts often in their lifetime, of apparitions and omens; but they had never agreed that such things could be. It had never been a part of his wife's creed that she could have a spirit that could return to walk the earth. Her after-world was quite a different affair, a vague heaven, no less, from which the righteous did not trouble to return. Yet here she was now, bending over the table in her black skirt and gray shawl, her pale profile outlined against the moonlight.

"Phœbe," called old Henry, thrilling from head to toe and putting out one bony hand, "have you come back?"

The figure did not stir, and he arose and walked uncertainly to the door, looking at it fixedly the while. As he drew near, however, the apparition resolved itself into its primal content—his old coat over the high-backed chair, the lamp by the paper, the half-open door.

"Well," he said to himself, his mouth open, "I thought shore I saw her." And he ran his hand strangely and vaguely through his hair, the while his nervous tension relaxed.

Another night, because of this first illusion, and because his mind was now constantly on her and he was old, he looked out of the window that was nearest his bed and commanded hen-coop and pig-pen and a part of the wagon-shed, and there, a faint mist exuding from the damp of the ground, he thought he saw her again. It was a little wisp of mist, one of those faint exhalations of the earth that rise in a cool night after a warm day, and flicker like small white cypresses of fog before they disappear. It had been a custom of hers to cross the lot from her kitchen door to the pig-pen to throw in any scrap that was left from her cooking, and here she was again. He sat up and watched it strangely, doubtfully, because of his previous experience, but inclined, because of the nervous titillation that passed over his body, to believe that spirits really were, and that Phœbe, who would be concerned because of his lonely state, must be thinking about him, and hence returning. It would be within the province of her charity so to do, and like her loving interest in him. He quivered and watched it eagerly; but, a faint breath of air stirring, it wound away toward the fence and disappeared.

A third night, as he was actually dreaming, some ten days later, she came to his bedside and put her hand on his head.

"Poor Henry!" she said. "It's too bad."

He roused out of his sleep, actually to see her, he thought, moving from his bed-room into the one living-room, her figure a shadowy mass of black. The weak straining of his eyes caused little points of light to flicker about the outlines of her form. He arose, greatly astonished, walked the floor in the cool room, convinced that Phœbe was coming back to him. If he only thought sufficiently, if he

made it perfectly clear by his feeling that he needed her greatly, she would come back, this kindly wife, and tell him what to do. She would perhaps be with him much of the time, in the night, anyhow; and that would make this lonely state endurable.

In age and with the feeble it is not such a far cry from the subtleties of illusion to actual hallucination, and in due time this transition was made for Henry. Night after night he waited, expecting her return. Once in his weird mood he thought he saw a pale light moving about the room, and another time he thought he saw her walking in the orchard after dark. It was one morning when the details of his lonely state were virtually unendurable that he woke with the thought that she was not dead. How he had arrived at this conclusion it is hard to say. His mind had gone. In its place was a fixed illusion. He and Phœbe had had a senseless quarrel. He had reproached her for not leaving his pipe where he was accustomed to find it, and she had left. It was an aberrated fulfilment of her old jesting threat that if he did not behave himself she would leave him.

"I guess I could find yuh ag'in," he had always said. But her cackling threat had always been:

"Yuh'll not find me if I ever leave yuh. I guess I kin git some place where yuh can't find me."

This morning when he arose he did not think to build the fire in the customary way or to grind his coffee and cut his bread, as was his wont, but solely to meditate as to where he should search for her and how he should induce her to come back. Recently the one horse had been dispensed with because he found it cumbersome and beyond his needs. He took down his soft crush hat after he had dressed himself, a new glint of interest and determination in his eye, and taking his black crook cane from behind the door, where he had always placed it, started out briskly to look for her among the distant neighbors that he knew. His old shoes clumped briskly in the dust as he walked, and his gray-black locks, now grown rather long, straggled out in a dramatic fringe or halo from under his hat. His short coat stirred busily as he walked, and his hands and face were peaked and pale.

"Why, hello, Henry! Where 're yuh goin' this mornin'?" inquired Farmer Dodge, who, hauling a load of wheat to market, encountered him on the public road. He had not seen the aged farmer in weeks, not since his wife's death, and he wondered now, seeing him looking so spry.

"Yuh ain't seen Phœbe, have yuh?" inquired the old man, looking up quizzically.

"Phœbe who?" inquired Farmer Dodge, not for the moment connecting the name with Henry's dead wife.

"Why, my wife Phœbe, o' course. Who do yuh s'pose I mean?" He stared up with a pathetic sharpness of glance from under his shaggy, gray eyebrows.

"Wall, I'll swan, Henry, yuh ain't jokin', are yuh?" said the solid Dodge, a pursy man, with a smooth, hard, red face. "It can't be your wife you're talkin' about. She's dead."

"Dead! Shucks!" retorted the demented Reifsneider. "She left me early this mornin', while I was sleepin'. She allus got up to build the fire, but she's gone now. We had a little spat last night, an' I guess that's the reason. But I guess I kin find her. She's gone over to Matilda Race's; that's where she's gone."

He started briskly up the road, leaving the amazed Dodge to stare in wonder after him.

"Well, I'll be switched!" he said aloud to himself. "He's clean out'n his head. That poor old feller 's been livin' down there till he's gone mad. I'll have to notify the authorities." And he flicked his whip with great enthusiasm. "Geddap!" he said, and was off.

Reifsneider met no one else in this poorly populated region until he reached the whitewashed fence of Matilda Race and her husband three miles away. He had passed several other houses en route, but these not being within the range of his illusion were not considered. His wife, who had known Matilda well, must be here. He opened the picket-gate which guarded the walk, and stamped briskly up to the door.

"Why, Mr. Reifsneider," exclaimed old Matilda herself, a stout woman, looking out of the door in answer to his knock, "what brings yuh here this mornin'?"

"Is Phœbe here?" he demanded eagerly.

"Phœbe who? What Phœbe?" replied Mrs. Race, curious as to this sudden development of energy on his part.

"Why, my Phœbe, o' course. My wife Phœbe. Who do yuh s'pose? Ain't she here now?"

"Lawsy me!" exclaimed Mrs. Race opening her mouth. "Yuh pore man! So you're clean out'n your mind. Now yuh come right in and sit down. I'll git yuh a cup o' coffee. O' course your wife ain't here; but yuh come in an' sit down. I'll find her fer yuh after a while. I know where she is."

The old farmer's eyes softened, and ne entered. He was a thin, pantalooned, patriarchal specimen, and he took off his hat and laid it on his knees quite softly and mildly.

"We had a quarrel last night, and she left me," he volunteered.

"Laws! laws!" sighed Mrs. Race, there being no one present with whom to share her astonishment as she went to her kitchen. "The pore man! Now somebody's got to look after him. He can't be allowed to run around the country this way lookin' for his dead wife. It's turrible.'

She boiled him a pot of coffee and brought in some of her new-baked bread and fresh butter. She set out some of her best jam and put a couple of eggs to boil, lying wholeheartedly the while.

"Now yuh stay right here, Uncle Henry, until Jake comes in, and I'll send him to look for Phœbe. I think it's more than likely she's over to Swinnerton with some o' her friends. Anyhow, we'll find out. Now yuh just drink this coffee an' eat this bread. Yuh must be tired. Yuh've had a long walk this mornin'." Her idea was to take counsel with Jake, "her man," and perhaps have him notify the authorities.

She bustled about, meditating on the uncertainties of life, while old Reifsneider thrummed on the rim of his hat with his pale fingers and later ate abstractedly of what she offered. His mind was on his wife, however, and since she was not here, it wandered vaguely away to a family by the name of Murray, miles away in another direction. He decided after a time that he would not wait for Jake Race to hunt his wife. He could not. He must be on, and urge her to come back.

"Well I'll be goin'," he said, getting up and looking strangely about him. "I guess she didn't come here. She went over to the Murrays'. I'll not wait any longer, Mrs. Race. There's a lot to do over to the house to-day." And out he marched, while Mrs. Race pleaded with him to stay. He took to the dusty road again in the warm spring sun, his cane striking the earth as he went.

It was two hours later that this pale figure of a man appeared in the Murrays' doorway, dusty, perspiring, eager. He had tramped all of five miles, and it was noon. An amazed husband and wife of sixty heard his strange query, and realized also that he was mad. They begged him to stay to dinner, intending to notify the authorities later and see what could be done; but though he stayed to partake of a little something, he did not stay long, and was off again, to another distant farmhouse, his idea of many things to do and his need of Phœbe impelling him.

The process by which a character assumes the significance of being peculiar, weird, harmless, in such a community is often involute and pathetic. This day saw Reifsneider at other doors, eagerly asking his unnatural question, and leaving a trail of amazement, sympathy, and pity in his wake. Although the authorities were informed,—the county sheriff, no less,—it was not deemed advisable to take him into custody; for when those who knew old Henry, had known him for so long, reflected on the condition of the county insane asylum, a place, because of the poverty of the district, of staggering aberration and sickening environment, it was decided to let him remain at large; for, strange to relate, it was found on investigation that at night he returned to his lonesome domicile to find whether his wife had returned, and to brood there in loneliness until the morning. Who would lock up a thin, eager old man with long iron-gray hair and an attitude of kindly, innocent inquiry, particularly when he was well known for a past of only kindly servitude and reliability? Those who had known him best rather agreed that he should be allowed to roam at large. He could do no harm. There were many who were willing to help him as to food, old clothes, the odds and ends of his daily life—at least at first. His figure after a time became not so much a commonplace as an accepted curiosity, and the replies, "Why, no, Henry; I ain't seen her," or "No, Henry; she ain't been here to-day," more customary.

He was an odd figure in the sun and rain, on dusty roads and muddy ones, encountered occasionally in strange and unexpected places, pursuing his

endless search. Under-nourishment, after a time, although the neighbors and those who knew his history gladly contributed from their store, affected his body; for he walked much and ate little. The longer he roamed the public highway in this manner, the deeper became his strange hallucination; and finding it harder and harder to return from his more and more distant pilgrimages, he finally took a few utensils from his home store and, making a small package of them, carried them with him in order that he might not be compelled to return. In an old tin coffee-pot of large size he placed a small tin cup, a knife, fork, and spoon, some salt and pepper, and to the outside of it, by a string forced through a pierced hole, he fastened a plate, which could be released, and which was his woodland table. It was no trouble for him to secure the little food that he needed, and with a strange, almost religious dignity he had no hesitation in asking for that much. By degrees his hair became longer and longer, his once black hat became an earthen brown, and his clothes threadbare and dusty.

For all of a year he walked, and none knew how wide were his perambulations, nor how he survived the storms and cold. They could not see him, with homely rural understanding and forethought, sheltering himself in haycocks, or by the sides of cattle, whose warm bodies protected him from the cold and whose dull understandings were not opposed to his harmless presence. Overhanging rocks and trees kept him at times from the rain, and a friendly hay-loft or corn-crib was not above his humble consideration.

The involute progression of hallucination is strange. From asking at doors and being constantly rebuffed or denied, he finally came to the conclusion that although his Phœbe might not be in any of the houses at the doors of which he inquired, she might nevertheless be within the sound of his voice. And so, from patient inquiry, he began to call sad, occasional cries, that ever and anon waked the quiet landscapes and ragged hill regions, and set to echoing his thin "O-o-o Phœbe! O-o-o Phœbe!" It had a pathetic, albeit insane, ring, and many a farmer or plowboy or country housewife came to know it even from afar and to say, "There goes old Reifsneider."

Another thing that puzzled him greatly after a time and after many hundreds of inquiries was, when he no longer had any particular door-yard in view and no special inquiry to make, which way to go. These cross-roads, which occasionally led in four or even six directions, came after a time to puzzle him. But to solve this knotty problem, which became more and more of a puzzle, there came to his aid another hallucination. Phœbe's spirit or some power of the air or wind or nature would tell him. If he stood at the center of the parting of the ways, closed his eyes, turned thrice about, and called, "O-o-o Phœbe!" twice, and then threw his cane straight before him, that would surely indicate which way to go for Phœbe, or one of these mystic powers would govern its direction and fall! In whichever direction it went, even

though, as was not infrequently the case, it took him back along the path he had already come, he was not so far gone in his mind but that he gave himself ample time to search before calling again,——but that he had the strange feeling that sometime he would find her. There were hours when his feet were sore, and his limbs weary, when he would stop in the heat to wipe his faded brow, or in the cold to beat his arms. Sometimes, after throwing his cane, and finding it indicating the direction from which he had just come, he would shake his head wearily, and philosophically, as if contemplating the unbelievable or an untoward fate, and then start briskly off. His strange figure came finally to be known in the farthest reaches of three or four counties. Old Reifsneider was a pathetic character. His fame was wide.

Near a little town called Watersville, in Green County, perhaps four miles from that minor center of human activity, there was a place or precipice locally known as the Red Cliff, a sheer wall of red sandstone, perhaps a hundred feet high, which raised its sharp wall for half a mile or more above the fruitful corn-fields and orchards that lay beneath, and which was surmounted by a thick grove of trees. The slope that slowly led up to it from the opposite side was covered by a rank growth of beech, hickory, and ash, through which threaded a number of wagon-tracks crossing at various angles. In fair weather it had become old Reifsneider's habit, so inured was he by now to the open, to make his bed in some patch of trees of this character, to fry his bacon or boil his eggs at the foot of some tree, before laying himself down for the night. His was a light and inconsequential sleep. More often the moonlight, some sudden wind stirring in the trees, or a reconnoitering animal, would arouse him, and he would sit up and think, or pursue his quest in the moonlight or the dark, a strange, unnatural, half wild, half savage-looking, but utterly harmless, creature, calling at lonely road crossings, staring at dark and shuttered houses, and wondering where, where, Phœbe could really be.

That particular lull that comes in the systole-diastole of this earthly ball at two o'clock in the morning invariably aroused him, and though he might not go any farther, he would sit up and contemplate the dark or the stars, wondering. Sometimes in the strange processes of his mind he would fancy that he saw moving among the trees the figure of his lost wife, and then he would get up to follow, taking his utensils, always on a string, and his cane.

It was in the seventh year of these hopeless peregrinations, in the dawn of a similar springtime to that in which his wife had died, that he came at last one night to the vicinity of this little patch of woods that crowned the rise to the Red Cliff. His far-flung cane, used as a divining-rod at the last cross-roads, had brought him hither. He had walked many, many miles. It was after ten o'clock at night, and he was very weary. Long wandering and little eating had left him only a shadow of his former self. It was a question now

not so much of physical strength, but of spiritual endurance that kept him up. He had scarcely eaten this day, and, now exhausted, set himself down in the dark to rest and possibly to sleep. Curiously, a strange suggestion of the presence of his wife surrounded him. It would not be long now, he counseled himself, although the long months had brought him nothing. He fell asleep after a time, his head on his knees. At midnight the moon began to rise, and at two in the morning, his wakeful hour, was a large silver disk shining through the trees to the east. He opened his eyes when the radiance became strong, making a silver pattern at his feet, and lighting the woods with strange lusters and silvery, shadowy forms. His old notion that his wife must be near to him occurred to him as it usually did on occasions of this kind, and he looked about him with a strange, speculative, anticipatory eye. What was it that moved in the distant shadows along the path by which he had entered, a pale, flickering will-o'-the-wisp that bobbed gracefully among the trees, and riveted his expectant gaze? Moonlight and shadows combined to give it a strange form and a strange reality, this fluttering of bog-fire or dancing of wandering fire-flies. Was it truly his lost Phœbe? By a circuitous route it passed about him, and in his fevered state he fancied that he could see the very eyes of her, not as she was when he last saw her in the black dress and shawl, but a strangely younger Phœbe now, the one whom he had known years before as a girl. Old Reifsneider got up. He had been expecting and dreaming of this expected hour all these days, and now, as he saw the feeble light dancing, he peered at it questioningly, one thin hand in his gray hair.

There came to him now for the first time in many years the full charm of her girlish figure as he had first known it in boyhood, the pleasing, sympathetic smile, the brown hair, the blue sash she had once worn about her waist, her gay, graceful movements. He walked around the base of the tree, straining with his eyes, forgetting for once his cane and his utensils, and following eagerly after. On she moved before him; a will-o'-the-wisp, a little flame above her head; and it seemed as though among the small saplings of ash and beech and the thick trunks of hickory and elm that she signaled with a young, lightsome hand.

"O Phœbe! Phœbe!" he called. "Have yuh really come?" And hurrying faster, he fell once, scrambling lamely to his feet, only to see the light in the distance dancing illusively on. On and on he hurried faster and faster, until he was fairly running, brushing his ragged arms against the trees, striking his hands and face against impeding twigs. His hat was gone, his lungs were breathless, when coming to the edge of the cliff, he saw her below, among a silvery wonder of apple-trees now blooming in the spring.

"O Phœbe," he called. "Oh, no; don't leave me!" And feeling the lure of a world where love was young and Phœbe was as this vision presented her, he gave a gay cry of "Oh, wait, Phœbe!" and leaped.

Some farmer-boys, reconnoitering this region of bounty and prospect, found first the tin utensils tied together under the tree where he had left them. Months after his body was found, his old hat was discovered lying under some low-growing saplings the twigs of which had held it back. At the foot of the cliff they found him, pale, broken, elate, a molded smile of peace and delight upon his lips. No one of all the simple population knew how eagerly and joyously he had found his lost mate.

THE STICK-IN-THE-MUDS[1]

RUPERT HUGHES

A skiff went prowling along the Avon River in the unhurried English twilight that releases the sunset with reluctance and defers luxuriously the roll call of the stars.

The skiff floated low, for the man alone in it was heavy and he was in no greater haste than the northern night. Which was against the traditions, for he was an American, an American business man.

He was making his way through the sky-hued water stealthily lest he disturb the leisure of the swans, drowsy above their own images; lest he discourage the nightingale trying a few low flute notes in the cathedral tower of shadow that was a tree above the tomb of Shakespeare.

The American had never heard a nightingale and it was his first pilgrimage to the shrine of the actor-manager whose productions Americans curiously couple with the Bible as sacred lore.

During the day Joel Wixon had seen the sights of Stratford with the others from his country and from England and the Continent. But now he wanted to get close to Shakespeare. So he hired the skiff and declined the services of the old boat lender.

And now he was stealing up into the rich gloom the church spread across the river. He was pushing the stern of the boat foremost so that he could feast his eyes. He was making so little speed that the only sounds were the choked sob of the water where the boat cleaved it gently and the tinkle of the drops that fell from the lazy oars with something of the delicate music of the uncertain nightingale.

Being a successful business man, Wixon was a suffocated poet. The imagination and the passion and the orderliness that brought him money were the same energies that would have made him a success in verse. But lines were not his line, and he was inarticulate and incoherent when beauty overwhelmed him, as it did in nearly every form.

He shivered now before the immediate majesty of the scene, and the historic meanings that enriched it as with an embroidered arras. Yet he gave out no more words than an Æolian harp shuddering with ecstasy in a wind too gentle to make it audible.

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In such moods he hunted solitude, for he was ashamed to be seen, afraid to be observed in the raptures that did not belong in the vocabulary of a business man.

He had talked at noon about the fact that he and Shakespeare's father were in wool, and he had annoyed a few modest Americans by comparing the petty amount of the elder Shakespeare's trade with the vast total pouring from his own innumerable looms driven with the electricity that the Shakespeares had never dreamed of.

He had redeemed himself for his pretended brag by a meek admission:

"But I'm afraid my boy will never write another *Hamlet*."

Yet what could he know of his own son? How little Will Shakespeare's father or his scandalized neighbors could have fancied that the scapegrace good-for-naught who left the town for the town's good would make it immortal; and, coming back to die and lie down forever beside the Avon, would bring a world of pilgrims to a new Mecca, the shrine of the supreme unique poet of all human time?

A young boy even now was sauntering the path along the other shore, so lazily tossing pebbles into the stream that the swans hardly protested. It came upon Wixon with a kind of silent lightning that Shakespeare had once been such another boy skipping pebbles across the narrow river and peering up into the trees to find out where the nightingale lurked.

Perhaps three hundred years from now some other shrine would claim the pilgrims, the home perhaps of some American boy now groping through the amber mists of adolescence or some man as little revered by his own neighbors and rivals as the man Shakespeare was when he went back to Avon to send back to London his two plays a year to the theatres.

Being a practical man, which is a man who strives to make his visions palpable, Wixon thought of his own home town and the colony of boys that prospered there in the Middle West.

He knew that no one would seek the town because of his birth there, for he was but a buyer of fleeces, a carder of wools, a spinner of threads, and a weaver of fabrics to keep folks' bodies warm. His weaves wore well, but they wore out.

The weavers of words were the ones whose fabrics lasted beyond the power of time and mocked the moths. Was there any such spinner in Carthage to give the town eternal blazon to ears of flesh and blood? There was one who might have been the man if—

Suddenly he felt himself again in Carthage. There was a river there too; not a little bolt of chatoyant silk like the Avon, which they would have called a "crick" back there. Before Carthage ran the incomprehensible floods of old Mississippi himself, Father of Waters, deep and vast and swift. They had lately swung a weir across it to make it work—a concrete wall a mile wide and more, and its tumbling cascades spun no little mill wheels, but swirled thundering turbines that lighted cities and ran street cars a hundred miles away.

And yet it had no Shakespeare.

And yet again it might have had if—

The twilight was so deep now that he shipped his oars in the gloom and gave himself back to the past.

He was in another twilight, only it was the counter twilight between star quench and sun blaze.

Two small boys, himself one of them; his sworn chum, Luke Mellows, the other, meeting in the silent street just as the day tide seeped in from the east and submerged the stars.

Joel had tied a string to his big toe and hung it from his window. Luke had done the same. They were not permitted to explode alarm clocks and ruin the last sweets of sleep in either home. So they had agreed that the first to wake should rise and dress with stealth, slip down the dark stairs of his house, into the starlit street and over to the other's home and pull the toe cord.

On this morning Luke had been the earlier out, and his triumphant yanks had dragged Joel feet first from sleep, and from the bed and almost through the window. Joel had howled protests in shrill whispers down into the gloom, and then, untying his outraged toe, had limped into his clothes and so to the yard.

The two children, in the huge world disputed still by the night, had felt an awe of the sky and the mysteries going on there. The envied man who ran up the streets of evenings lighting the gas street lamps was abroad again already with his little ladder and his quick insect-like motions; only, now he was turning out the lights, just as a similar but invisible being was apparently running around heaven and putting out the stars.

Joel remembered saying: "I wonder if they're turnin' off the stars up there to save gas too."

Luke did not like the joke. He said, using the word "funny" solemnly: "It's funny to see light putting out light. The stars will be there all day, but we won't be able to see 'em for the sun."

(Wixon thought of this now, and of how Shakespeare's fame had drowned out so many stars. A man had told him that there were hundreds of great writers in Shakespeare's time that most people never heard of.)

As the boys paused, the air quivered with a hoarse *moo!* as of a gigantic cow bellowing for her lost calf. It was really a steamboat whistling for the bridge to open the draw and let her through to the south with her raft of logs.

Both of the boys called the boat by name, knowing her voice: "It's the Bessie May Brown!" They started on a run to the bluff overlooking the river, their short legs making a full mile of the scant furlong.

Often as Joel had come out upon the edge of that bluff on his innumerable journeys to the river for fishing, swimming, skating, or just staring, it always smote him with the thrill Balboa must have felt coming suddenly upon the Pacific.

On this morning there was an unwonted grandeur: the whole vault of the sky was curdled with the dawn, a reef of solid black in the west turning to purple and to amber and finally in the east to scarlet, with a few late

planets caught in the meshes of the sunlight and trembling like dew on a spider's web.

And the battle in the sky was repeated in the sea-like river with all of the added magic of the current and the eddies and the wimpling rushes of the dawn winds.

On the great slopes were houses and farmsteads throwing off the night and in the river the Bessie May Brown, her red light and her green light trailing scarfs of color on the river, as she chuffed and clanged her bell, and smote the water with her stern wheel. In the little steeple of the pilot house a priest guided her and her unwieldy acre of logs between the piers of the bridge whose lanterns were still belatedly aglow on the girders and again in echo in the flood.

Joel filled his little chest with a gulp of morning air and found no better words for his rhapsody than: "Gee, but ain't it great?"

To his amazement, Luke, who had always been more sensitive than he, shook his head and turned away.

"Gosh, what do you want for ten cents?" Joel demanded, feeling called upon to defend the worthiness of the dawn.

Luke began to cry. He dropped down on his own bare legs in the weeds and twisted his face and his fists in a vain struggle to fight off unmanly grief.

Joel squatted at his side and insisted on sharing the secret; and finally Luke forgot the sense of family honor long enough to yield to the yearning for company in his misery.

"I was up here at midnight last night, and I don't like this place any more."

"You didn't come all by yourself? Gee!"

"No, Momma was here too."

"What she bring you out here at a time like that for?"

"She didn't know I was here."

"Didn't know— What she doin' out here, then?"

"She and Poppa had a turble quar'l. I couldn't hear what started it, but finely it woke me up and I listened, and Momma was cryin' and Poppa was swearin'. And at last Momma said: 'Oh, I might as well go and throw myself in the river,' and Poppa said: 'Good riddance of bad rubbish!' and Momma stopped cryin' and she says: 'All right!' in an awful kind of a voice, and I heard the front door open and shut."

"Gee!"

"Well, I jumped into my shirt and pants and slid down the rain pipe and ran along the street, and there sure enough was Momma walkin' as fast as she could.

"I was afraid to go near her. I don't know why, but I was. So I just sneaked along after her. The street was black as pitch 'cep' for the street lamps, and as she passed ever' one I could see she was still cryin' and stumblin' along like she was blind.

"It was so late we didn't meet anybody at tall, and there wasn't a light in a single house except Joneses, where somebody was sick, I guess. But they didn't pay any attention, and at last she came to the bluff here. An I follered. When she got where she could see the river she stopped

and stood there, and held her arms out like she was goin' to jump off or fly, or somethin'. The moon was up, and the river was so bright you could hardly look at it, and Momma stood there with her arms 'way out like she was on the Cross, or something.

"I was so scared and so cold I shook like I had a chill. I was afraid she could hear my teeth chatterin', so I dropped down in the weeds and thistles to keep her from seein' me. It was just along about here too.

"By and by Momma kind of broke like somebody had hit her, then she began to cry again and to walk up and down wringin' her hands. Once or twice she started to run down the bluff and I started to foller; but she stopped like somebody held her back, and I sunk down again.

"Then, after a long time, she shook her head like she couldn't, and turned back. She walked right by me and didn't see me. I heard her whisperin': 'I can't, I can't. My pore children!'

"Then she went back down the street and me after her, wishin' I could go up and help her. But I was afraid she wouldn't want me to know, and I just couldn't go near her."

Luke wept helplessly at the memory of his poltroonery, and Joel tried roughly to comfort him with questions.

"Gee! I don't blame you. I don't guess I could have either. But what was it all about, d'you s'pose?"

"I don't know. Momma went to the front door, and it was locked, and she stood a long, long while before she could bring herself to knock. Then she tapped on it soft like. And by and by Poppa opened the door and said: 'Oh, you're back, are you?' Then he turned and walked away, and she went in.

"I could have killed him with a rock, if she hadn't shut the door. But all I could do was to climb back up the rain pipe. I was so tired and discouraged I nearly fell and broke my neck. And I wisht I had have. But there wasn't any more quar'l, only Momma kind of whimpered once or twice, and Poppa said: 'Oh, for God's sake, shut up and lea' me sleep. I got to open the store in the mornin', ain't I?' I didn't do much sleepin', and I guess that's why I woke up first."

That was all of the story that Joel could learn. The two boys were shut out by the wall of grown-up life. Luke crouched in bitter moodiness, throwing clods of dirt at early grasshoppers and reconquering his lost dignity. At last he said: "If you ever let on to anybody what I told you—"

"Aw, say!" was Joel's protest. His knighthood as a sworn chum was put in question and he was cruelly hurt.

Luke took assurance from his dismay and said in a burst of fury: "Aw, I just said that! I know you won't tell. But just you wait till I can earn a pile of money. I'll take Momma away from that old scoundrel so fast it'll make his head swim!" Then he slumped again. "But it takes so doggone long to grow up, and I don't know how to earn anything."

Then the morning of the world caught into its irresistible vivacity the two boys in the morning of their youth, and before long they had

forgotten the irremediable woes of their elders, as their elders also forgot the problems of national woes and cosmic despair.

The boys descended the sidelong path at a jog, brushing the dew and grasshoppers and the birds from the hazel bushes and the papaw shrubs, and scaring many a dewy rabbit from cover.

At the bottom of the bluff the railroad track was the only road along the river, and they began the tormenting passage over the uneven ties with cinders everywhere for their bare feet. They postponed as long as they could the delight of breakfast, and then, sitting on a pile of ties, made a feast of such hard-boiled eggs, cookies, cheese, and crackers as they had been able to wheedle from their kitchens the night before.

Their talk that morning was earnest, as boys' talk is apt to be. They debated their futures as boys are apt to do. Being American boys, two things characterized their plans: one, that the sky itself was the only limit to their ambitions; the other, that they must not follow their fathers' businesses.

Joel's father was an editor; Luke's kept a hardware store.

So Joel wanted to go into trade and Luke wanted to be a writer.

The boys wrangled with the shrill intensity of youth. A stranger passing might have thought them about to come to blows. But they were simply noisy with earnestness. Their argument was as unlike one of the debates in Vergil's *Eclogues* as possible. It was an antistrophe of twang and drawl:

"Gee, you durned fool, watcha want gointa business for?"

"Durned fool your own self! Watcha wanta to be a writer for?"

Then they laughed wildly, struck at each other in mock hostility, and went on with their all-day walk, returning at night too weary for books or even a game of authors or checkers.

Both liked to read, and they were just emerging from the stratum of Old Cap Collier, Nick Carter, the Kid-Glove Miner, and the Steam Man into *Ivanhoe*, *Scottish Chiefs*, and *Cudjo's Cave*. They had passed out of the Oliver Optic, Harry Castlemon, James Otis era.

Joel Wixon read for excitement; Luke Mellows for information as to the machinery of authorship.

Young as they were, they went to the theatre—to the op'ra house, which never housed opera.

Joel went often and without price, since his father, being an editor, had the glorious prerogative of "comps." Perhaps that was why Luke wanted to be a writer.

Mr. Mellows, as hard as his own ware, did not believe in the theatre and could not be bullied or wept into paying for tickets. But Luke became a program boy and got in free, a precious privilege he kept secret as long as possible, and lost as soon as his father noticed his absences from home on play nights. Then he was whipped for wickedness and ordered to give up the theatre forever.

Perhaps Luke would never suffer again so fiercely as he suffered from that denial. It meant a free education and a free revel in the frequent

performances of Shakespeare, and of repertory companies that gave such triumphs as *East Lynne* and *Camille*, not to mention the road companies that played the uproarious *Peck's Bad Boy*, *Over the Garden Wall*, *Skipped by the Light of the Moon*, and the Charles Hoyt screamers.

The theatre had been a cloud-veiled Olympus of mystic exultations, of divine terrors, and of ambrosial laughter. But it was a bad influence. Mr. Mellows's theories of right and wrong were as simple and sharp as his own knives: whatever was delightful and beautiful and laughterful was manifestly wicked, God having plainly devised the pretty things as baits for the devil's fishhooks.

Joel used to tell Luke about the plays he saw, and the exile's heart ached with envy. They took long walks up the river or across the bridge into the wonderlands that were overflowed in high-water times. And they talked always of their futures. Boyhood was a torment, a slavery. Heaven was just over the twenty-first birthday.

Joel got his future, all but the girl he planned to take with him up the grand stairway of the palace he foresaw. Luke missed his future, and his girl and all of his dreams.

Between the boys and their manhood stood, as usual, the fathers, strange monsters, ogres, who seemed to have forgotten, at the top of the beanstalk, that they had once been boys themselves down below.

After the early and unceasing misunderstandings as to motives and standards of honor and dignity came the civil war over education.

Wouldn't you just know that each boy would get the wrong dad? Joel's father was proud of Luke and not of Joel. He had printed some of Luke's poems in the paper and called him a "precocious" native genius. Joel's father wished that his boy could have had his neighbor's boy's gift. It was his sorrow that Joel had none of the artistic leanings that are called "gifts." He regretfully gave him up as one who would not carry on the torch his father had set out with. He could not force his child to be a genius, but he insisted that Joel should have an education. The editor had found himself handicapped by a lack of the mysterious enrichment that a tour through college gives the least absorbent mind. He was determined to provide it for his boy, though Joel felt that every moment's delay in leaping into the commercial arena was so much delay in arriving at gladiatorial eminence.

Luke's father had had even less education than Editor Wixon, but he was proud of it. He had never gone far in the world, but he was one of those men who are automatically proud of everything they do and derive even from failure or humiliation a savage conceit.

He made Luke work in his store or out of it as a delivery boy during vacations from such school terms as the law required. He saw the value of education enough to make out bills and write dunning letters. "Books" to him meant the doleful books that bookkeepers keep.

As for any further learning, he thought it a waste of time, a kind of wantonness.

He felt that Providence had intentionally selected a cross for him in the son who was wicked and foolish enough to want to read stories and see plays and go to school for years instead of going right into business.

The thought of sending his boy through a preparatory academy and college and wasting his youth on nonsense was outrageous. It maddened him to have the boy plead for such folly. He tried in vain to whip it out of him.

Joel's ideas of education were exactly those of Mr. Mellows, but he did not like Mr. Mellows because of the anguish inflicted on Luke. Joel used to beg Luke to run away from home. But that was impracticable for two reasons: Luke was not of the runaway sort, but meek, and shy, and obedient to a fault.

Besides, while a boy can run away from school, he cannot easily run away to school. If he did, he would be sent back, and if he were not sent back, how was he to pay for his "tooition" and his board and books and clo'es?

It was Luke's influence that sent Joel away to boardin' school. He so longed to go himself that Joel felt it foolish to deny himself the godlike opportunity. So Luke went to school vicariously in Joel, as he got his other experiences vicariously in books.

At school Joel found so much to do outside of his classes that he grew content to go all the way. There was a glee club to manage, also an athletic club; a paper to solicit ads and subscriptions for; class officers to be elected, with all the delights of political maneuvering—a world in little to run with all the solemnity and competition of the adult cosmos. So Joel was happy and lucky and successful in spite of himself.

The day after Joel took train up the river to his academy Luke took the position his father secured for him and entered the little back room where the Butterly Bottling Works kept its bookkeepers on high stools.

The Butterly soda pop, ginger ales, and other soft drinks were triumphs of insipidity, and their birch beer sickened the thirstiest child. But the making and the marketing and even the drinking of them were matters of high emprise compared to the keeping of the books.

One of the saddest, sweetest, greatest stories ever written is Ellis Pigsis-pigs Butler's fable of the contented little donkey that went round and round in the mill and thought he was traveling far. But that donkey was blind and had no dreams denied.

Luke Mellows was a boy, a boy that still felt his life in every limb, a boy devoured with fantastic ambitions. He had a genius within that smothered and struggled till it all but perished unexpressed. It lived only enough to be an anguish. It hurt him like a hidden, unmentioned ingrowing toe nail that cuts and bleeds and excruciates the fleet member it is meant to protect.

When Joel came home for his first vacation, with the rush of a young colt that has had a good time in the corral but rejoices in the old pastures, his first cry was for Luke. When he learned where he was, he hurried to

the Bottling Works. He was turned away with the curt remark that employees could not be seen in business hours. In those days there were no machines to simplify and verify the bookkeeper's treadmill task, and business hours were never over.

Joel left word at Luke's home for Luke to call for him the minute he was free. He did not come that evening, nor the next. Joel was hurt more than he dared admit.

It was Sunday afternoon before Luke came round, a different Luke, a lean, wan, worn-out shred of a youth. His welcome was sickly.

"Gee-min-*ent*-ly!" Joel roared. "I thought you was mad at me about something. You never came near."

"I wanted to come," Luke croaked, "but nights, I'm too tired to walk anywheres, and besides, I usually have to go back to the offus."

"Gee, that's damn tough," said Joel, who had grown from darn to damn.

Thinking to light Luke up with a congenial theme, Joel heroically forebore to describe the marvels of academy life, and asked: "What you been readin' lately? A little bit of everything, I guess, hey?"

"A whole lot of nothin'," Luke sighed. "I got no strength for readin' by the time I shut my ledgers. I got to save my eyes, you know. The light's bad in that back room."

"What you been writin', then?"

"Miles of figures and entries about one gross bottles lemon, two gross sassaprilla, one gross empties returned."

"No more poetry?"

"No more nothin'."

Joel was obstinately cheerful. "Well, you been makin' money, anyways; that's something."

"Yeh. I buy my own shoes and clo'es now and pay my board and lodgin' at home. And paw puts the two dollars that's left into the savings bank. I got nearly thirty dollars there now. I'll soon have enough for a winter soot and overcoat."

"Gee, can't you go buggy ridin' even with Kit?"

"I could if I had the time and the price, and if her maw wasn't so poorly that Kitty can't get away. I go over there Sunday afternoons sometimes, but her maw always hollers for her to come in. She's afraid to be alone. Kit's had to give up the high school account of her maw."

"How about her goin' away to be a great singer?"

Luke grinned at the insanity of such childish plans. "Oh, that's all off. Kit can't even practice any more. It makes her mother nervous. And Kit had to give up the church choir too. You'd hardly know her. She cries a lot about lookin' so scrawny. O' course I tell her she's pirtier than ever, but that only makes her mad. She can't go to sociables or dances or picnics, and if she could she's got no clo'es. We don't have much fun together; just sit and mope, and then I say: 'Well, guess I better mosey on home,' and she says: 'All right; see you again next Sunday, I s'pose. G'by.'"

The nightingale annoyed the owl and was hushed, and the poet rimed sums in a daybook.

The world waited for them and needed them without knowing it; it

would have rewarded them with thrilled attention and wealth and fame. But silence was their portion, silence and the dark and an ache that had no voice.

Joel listened to Luke's elegy and groaned: "Gee!"

But he had an optimism like a powerful spring, and it struck back now with a whir: "I'll tell you what, Luke. Just you wait till I'm rich, then I'll give you a job as vice president, and you can marry Kitty and live on Broadway, in Noo York."

"I've got over believin' in Sandy Claus," said Luke.

Joel saw little of him during this vacation and less during the next. Being by nature a hater of despair, he avoided Luke. He had fits of remorse for this, and once he dared to make a personal appeal to old Mr. Mellows to send Luke away to school. He was received with scant courtesy and only tolerated because he gave the father a chance to void some of his bile at the worthlessness of Luke.

"He's no good; that's what's the matter of him. And willful too—he just mopes around because he wants to show me I'm wrong. But he's only cuttin' off his own nose to spite his face. I'll learn him who's got the most will power."

Joel was bold enough to suggest: "Maybe Luke would be differ'nt if you'd let him go to college. You know, Mr. Mellows, if you'll 'scuse my saying it, there's some natures that are differ'nt from others. You hitch a race horse up to a plow and you spoil a good horse and your field both. Seems to me as if, if Luke got a chance to be a writer or a professor or something, he might turn out to be a wonder. You can't teach a canary bird to be a hen, you know, and—"

Mr. Mellows locked himself in that ridiculous citadel of ancient folly. "When you're as old as I am, Joel, you'll know more. The first thing anybody's got to learn in this world is to respect their parents."

Joel wanted to say: "I should think that depended on the parents."

But, of course, he kept silent, as the young usually do when they hear the old maundering, and he gave up as he heard the stupid dolt returning to his old refrain: "I left school when I was twelve years old. Ain't had a day sence, and I can't say as I've been exactly a failure. Best hardware store in Carthage and holdin' my own in spite of bad business."

Joel slunk away, unconvinced but baffled. One summer he brought all his pressure to bear on Luke to persuade him to run away from his job and strike out for the big city where the big opportunities grew.

But Luke shook his head. He lacked initiative. Perhaps that was where his talent was not genius. It blistered him, but it made no steam.

Shakespeare had known enough to leave Stratford. He had had to hold horses outside the theatre, and even then he had organized a little business group of horse holders called "Shakespeare's boys." He had the business sense, and he forced his way into the theatre and became a stockholder. Shakespeare was always an adventurer. He had to work in a butcher's shop, but before he was nineteen he was already married.

Luke Mellows had not the courage or the recklessness to marry Kitty, though he had as good a job as Shakespeare's.

Shakespeare was twenty-one when he went to London, but he went.

London was a boom town then, about the size of Trenton or Grand Rapids, or Spokane, and growing fast. Boys were running away from the farms and villages as they always have done. Other boys went to London from Stratford. John Sadler became a big wholesale grocer, and Richard Field a publisher. They had as various reasons then as now.

But the main thing was that they left home. That might mean a noble or a selfish ambition, but it took action.

Luke Mellows would not go. He dreaded to abandon his mother to the father who bullied them both. He could not bear to leave Kitty alone with the wretched mother who ruled her with tears.

Other boys ran or walked away from Carthage, some of them to become failures, and some half successes, and some of them to acquire riches and power. And other boys stayed at home.

Girls, too, had won obscurity by inertia or had swung into fame. There were Aspasias and Joans of Arc in miniature, minor Florence Nightingales and Melbas and Rosa Bonheurs. But they had all had to leap from the nest and try their wings. Of those that did not take the plunge, none made the flight.

Cowardice held some back, but the purest self-sacrifice others. Joel felt that there ought to be a heaven for these latter, yet he hoped that there was no hell for the former. For who can save himself from his own timidity, and who can protect himself from his own courage?

Given that little spur of initiative that little armor of selfish indifference to the clinging hands at home, and how many a soul might not have reached the stars? Look at the women who were crowding the rolls of fame of late just because all womankind had broken free of the apron strings of alleged respectability.

Joel had no proof that Luke Mellows would have amounted to much. Perhaps, if he had ventured over the nest's edge, he would have perished on the ground, trampled into dust by the fameward mob, or devoured by the critics that pounce upon every fledgling and suck the heart out of all that cannot fling them off.

But Joel could not surrender his childhood faith that Luke Mellows had been meant for another Shakespeare. Yet Mellows had never written a play or an act of a play. But, for that matter, neither had Shakespeare before he went to London. He was only a poet at first, and some of his poems were pretty poor stuff—if you took Shakespeare's name off it. And his first poems had to be published by his fellow townsman Field.

There were the childish poems by Luke Mellows that Joel's father had published in the Carthage *Clarion*. Joel had forgotten them utterly, and they were probably meritorious of oblivion. But there was one poem Luke had written that Joel memorized.

It appeared in the *Clarion* years after Joel was a success in wool. His

father still sent him the paper, and in one number Joel was rejoiced to read these lines:

THE ANONYMOUS

By Luke Mellows

Sometimes at night within a wooded park
Like an ocean cavern, fathoms deep in bloom,
Sweet scents, like hymns, from hidden flowers fume,
And make the wanderer happy, though the dark
Obscures their tint, their name, their shapely bloom.

So, in the thick-set chronicles of fame,
There hover deathless feats of souls unknown.
They linger like the fragrant smoke wreaths bloom
From liberal sacrifice. Gone face and name;
The deeds, like homeless ghosts, live on alone.

Wixon, seated in the boat on Avon and lost in such dusk that he could hardly see his hand upon the idle oar, recited the poem softly to himself, intoning it in the deep voice one saves for poetry. It sounded wonderful to him in the luxury of hearing his own voice upon the water and indulging his own memory. The somber mood was perfect, in accord with the realm of shadow and silence where everything beautiful and living was cloaked in the general blur.

After he had heard his voice chanting the last long oh's of the final verse, he was ashamed of his solemnity, and terrified lest some one might have heard him and accounted him insane. He laughed at himself for a sentimental fool.

He laughed too as he remembered what a letter of praise he had dictated to his astonished stenographer and fired off at Luke Mellows; and at the flippant letter he had in return.

Lay readers who send incandescent epistles to poets are apt to receive answers in sardonic prose. The poet lies a little, perhaps, in a very sane suspicion of his own transcendencies.

Luke Mellows had written:

Dear old Joel:

I sure am much obliged for your mighty handsome letter. Coming to one of the least successful wool-gatherers in the world from one of the most successful wool distributors, it deserves to be highly prized. And is. I will have it framed and handed down to my heirs, of which there are more than there will ever be looms.

You ask me to tell you all about myself. It won't take long. When the Butterly Bottlery went bust, I had no job at all for six months, so I got married to spite my father. And to please Kit, whose poor mother ceased to suffer about the same time.

The poor girl was so used to taking care of a poor old woman who couldn't be left alone that I became her patient just to keep all her talents from going to waste.

The steady flow of children seems to upset the law of supply and demand, for there is certainly no demand for more of my progeny and there is no supply for them. But somehow they thrive.

I am now running my father's store, as the old gentleman had a stroke and then another. The business is going to pot as rapidly as you would expect, but I haven't been able to kill it off quite yet.

Thanks for advising me to go on writing immortal poetry. If I were immortal, I might, but that fool thing was the result of about ten years' hard labor. I tried to make a sonnet of it, but I gave up at the end of the decade and called it whatever it is.

Your father's paper published it free of charge, and so my income from my poetry has been one-tenth of nothing per annum. Please don't urge me to do any more. I really can't afford it.

The poem was suggested to me by an ancient fit of blues over the fact that Kit's once-so-beautiful voice would never be heard in

song, and by the fact that her infinite goodnesses will never meet any recompense or even acknowledgment.

I was bitter the first five years, but the last five years I began to feel how rich this dark old world is in good, brave, sweet, lovable, heartbreakingly beautiful deeds that simply cast a little fragrance on the dark and are gone. They perfume the night and the busy daylight dispels them like the morning mists that we used to watch steaming and vanishing above the old river. The Mississippi is still here, still rolling along its eternal multitudes of snows and flowers and fruits and fish and snakes and dead men and boats and trees.

They go where they came from, I guess—in and out of nothing and back again.

It is a matter of glory to all of us that you are doing so nobly. Keep it up and give us something to brag about in our obscurity. Don't worry. We are happy enough in the dark. We have our batlike sports and our owllike prides, and the full sun would blind us and lose us our way.

Kit sends you her love—and blushes as she says it. That is a very daring word for such shy moles as we are, but I will echo it.

Yours for old sake's sake.

LUKE.

Vaguely remembering this letter now Joel inhaled a bit of the merciful chloroform that deadens the pain of thwarted ambition.

The world was full of men and women like Luke and Kit. Some had given up great hopes because they were too good to tread others down in their quest. Some had quenched great talents because they were too fearsome or too weak or too lazy to feed their lamps with oil and keep them trimmed and alight. Some had stumbled through life darkly with no gifts of talent, without even appreciation of the talents of others or of the flowerlike beauties that star the meadows.

Those were the people he had known. And then there were the people he had not known, the innumerable caravan that had passed across the earth while he lived, the inconceivable hosts that had gone before, tribe after tribe, generation upon generation, nation at the heels of nation, cycle on era on age, and the backward perpetuity from everlasting unto everlasting. People, people, peoples—poor souls, until the thronged stars that make a dust of the Milky Way were a lesser mob.

Here in this graveyard at Stratford lay men who might have overtopped Shakespeare's glory if they had but "had a mind to." Some of them had been held in higher esteem in their town. But they were forgotten, their names leveled with the surface of their fallen tombstones.

Had he not cried out in his own Hamlet: "O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams—which dreams indeed are ambition; for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream—and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow."

After all, the greatest of men were granted but a lesser oblivion than the least. And in that overpowering thought there was a strange comfort, the comfort of misery finding itself in an infinite company.

The night was thick upon Avon. The swans had gone somewhere. The lights in the houses had a sleepy look. It was time to go to bed.

Joel yawned with the luxury of having wearied his heart with emotion. He had thought himself out for once. It was good to be tired. He

put his oars into the stream and, dipping up reflected stars, sent them swirling in a doomsday chaos after him with the defiant revenge of a proud soul who scorns the universe that grinds him to dust.

The old boatman was surly with waiting. He did not thank the foreigner for his liberal largeness, and did not answer his good night.

As Wixon left the river and took the road for his hotel, the nightingale (that forever anonymous nightingale, only one among the millions of forgotten or throttled songsters) revolted for a moment or two against the stifling doom and shattered it with a wordless sonnet of fierce and beautiful protest—"The tawny-throated! What triumph! hark!—what pain!"

It was as if Luke Mellows had suddenly found expression in something better than words, something that any ear could understand, an ache that rang.

Wixon stopped, transfixed as by flaming arrows. He could not understand what the bird meant or what he meant, nor could the bird. But as there is no laughter that eases the heart like unpacking it of its woes in something beyond wording, so there is nothing that brightens the eyes like tears gushing without shame or restraint.

Joel Wixon felt that it was a good, sad, mad world, and that he had been very close to Shakespeare—so close that he heard things nobody had ever found the phrases for—things that cannot be said but only felt, and transmitted rather by experience than by expression from one proud worm in the mud to another.

THE CHINK AND THE CHILD

Thomas Burke

It is a tale of love and lovers that they tell in the low-lit Causeway that slinks from West India Dock Road to the dark waste of waters beyond. In Pennyfields, too, you may hear it; and I do not doubt that it is told in far-away Tai-Ping, in Singapore, in Tokio, in Shanghai, and those other gay-lamped haunts of wonder whither the wandering people of Limehouse go and whence they return so casually. It is a tale for tears, and should you hear it in the lilied tongue of the yellow men, it would awaken in you all your pity. In our bald speech it must, unhappily, lose its essential fragrance, that quality that will lift an affair of squalor into the loftier spheres of passion and imagination, beauty and sorrow. It will sound unconvincing, a little . . . you know . . . the kind of thing that is best forgotten. Perhaps . . .

But listen.

It is Battling Burrows, the lightning welter-weight of Shadwell, the box o' tricks, the Tetrarch of the ring, who enters first. Battling Burrows, the pride of Ratcliff, Poplar and Limehouse, and the despair of his manager and backers. For he loved wine, woman and song; and the boxing world held that he couldn't last long on that. There was any

amount of money in him for his parasites if only the damned women could be cut out; but again and again would he disappear from his training quarters on the eve of a big fight, to consort with Molly and Dolly, and to drink other things than barley-water and lemon-juice. Wherefore Chuck Lightfoot, his manager, forced him to fight on any and every occasion while he was good and a money-maker; for at any moment the collapse might come, and Chuck would be called upon by his creditors to strip off that "shirt" which at every contest he laid upon his man.

Battling was of a type that is too common in the eastern districts of London; a type that upsets all accepted classifications. He wouldn't be classed. He was a curious mixture of athleticism and degeneracy. He could run like a deer, leap like a greyhound, fight like a machine, and drink like a suction-hose. He was a bully; he had the courage of the high hero. He was an open-air sport; he had the vices of a French decadent.

It was one of his love adventures that properly begins this tale; for the girl had come to Battling one night with a recital of terrible happenings, of an angered parent, of a slammed door. . . . In her arms was a bundle of white rags. Now Battling, like so many sensualists, was also a sentimentalist. He took that bundle of white rags; he paid the girl money to get into the country; and the bundle of white rags had existed in and about his domicile in Pekin Street, Limehouse, for some eleven years. Her position was nondescript; to the casual observer it would seem that she was Battling's relief punch-ball—an unpleasant post for any human creature to occupy, especially if you are a little girl of twelve, and the place be the one-room household of the lightning welter-weight. When Battling was cross with his manager . . . well, it is indefensible to strike your manager or to throw chairs at him, if he is a good manager; but to use a dog-whip on a small child is permissible and quite as satisfying; at least, he found it so. On these occasions, then, when very cross with his sparring partners, or over-flushed with victory and juice of the grape, he would flog Lucy. But he was reputed by the boys to be a good fellow. He only whipped the child when he was drunk; and he was only drunk for eight months of the year.

For just over twelve years this bruised little body had crept about Poplar and Limehouse. Always the white face was scarred with red, or black-furrowed with tears; always in her steps and in her look was expectation of dread things. Night after night her sleep was broken by the cheerful Battling's brute voice and violent hands; and terrible were the lessons which life taught her in those few years. Yet, for all the starved face and the transfixed air, there was a lurking beauty about her, a something that called you in the soft curve of her cheek that cried for kisses and was fed with blows, and in the splendid mournfulness that grew in eyes and lips. The brown hair chimed against the pale face, like the rounding of a verse. The blue cotton frock and the broken shoes could not break the loveliness of her slender

figure or the shy grace of her movements as she flitted about the squalid alleys of the docks; though in all that region of wasted life and toil and decay, there was not one that noticed her, until . . .

Now there lived in Chinatown, in one lousy room over Mr. Tai Fu's store in Pennyfields, a wandering yellow man, named Cheng Huan. Cheng Huan was a poet. He did not realize it. He had never been able to understand why he was unpopular; and he died without knowing. But a poet he was, tinged with the materialism of his race, and in his poor listening heart strange echoes would awake of which he himself was barely conscious. He regarded things differently from other sailors; he felt things more passionately, and things which they felt not at all; so he lived alone instead of at one of the lodging-houses. Every evening he would sit at his window and watch the street. Then, a little later, he would take a jolt of opium at the place at the corner of Formosa Street.

He had come to London by devious ways. He had loafed on the Bund at Shanghai. The fateful intervention of a crimp had landed him on a boat. He got to Cardiff, and sojourned in its Chinatown; thence to Liverpool, to Glasgow; thence, by a ticket from the Asiatics' Aid Society, to Limehouse, where he remained for two reasons—because it cost him nothing to live there, and because he was too lazy to find a boat to take him back to Shanghai.

So he would lounge and smoke cheap cigarettes, and sit at his window, from which point he had many times observed the lyrical Lucy. He noticed her casually. Another day, he observed her, not casually. Later, he looked long at her; later still, he began to watch for her and for that strangely provocative something about the toss of the head and the hang of the little blue skirt as it coyly kissed her knee.

Then that beauty which all Limehouse had missed smote Cheng. Straight to his heart it went, and cried itself into his very blood. Thereafter the spirit of poetry broke her blossoms all about his odorous chamber. Nothing was the same. Pennyfields became a happy-lanterned street, and the monotonous fiddle in the house opposite was the music of his fathers. Bits of old song floated through his mind: little sweet verses of Le Tai-pih, murmuring of plum blossom, rice-field and stream. Day by day he would moon at his window, or shuffle about the streets, lighting to a flame when Lucy would pass and gravely return his quiet regard; and night after night, too, he would dream of a pale, lily-lovely child.

And now the Fates moved swiftly various pieces on their sinister board, and all that followed happened with a speed and precision that showed direction from higher ways.

It was Wednesday night in Limehouse, and for once clear of mist. Out of the coloured darkness of the Causeway stole the muffled wail of reed instruments, and, though every window was closely shuttered, between the joints shot jets of light and stealthy voices, and you could hear the whisper of slippered feet, and the

stuttering steps of the satyr and the sadist. It was to the café in the middle of the Causeway, lit by the pallid blue light that is the symbol of China throughout the world, that Cheng Huan came, to take a dish of noodle and some tea. Thence he moved to another house whose stairs ran straight to the street, and above whose doorway a lamp glowed like an evil eye. At this establishment he mostly took his pipe of "chandu" and a brief chat with the keeper of the house, for, although not popular, and very silent, he liked sometimes to be in the presence of his compatriots. Like a figure of a shadowgraph he slid through the door and up the stairs.

The chamber he entered was a bit of the Orient squatting at the portals of the West. It was a well-kept place where one might play a game of fantan, or take a shot or so of *li-un*, or purchase other varieties of Oriental delight. It was sunk in a purple dusk, though here and there a lantern stung the glooms. Low couches lay around the walls, and strange men decorated them: Chinese, Japs, Malays, Lascars, with one or two white girls; and sleek, noiseless attendants swam from couch to couch. Away in the far corner sprawled a lank figure in brown shirting, its nerveless fingers curled about the stem of a spent pipe. On one of the lounges a scorbutic nigger sat with a Jewess from Shadwell. Squatting on a table in the centre, beneath one of the lanterns, was a musician with a reed, blinking upon the company like a sly cat, and making his melody of six repeated notes.

The atmosphere churned. The dirt of years, tobacco of many growings, opium, betel nut, and moist flesh allied themselves in one grand assault against the nostrils.

As Cheng brooded on his insect-ridden cushion, of a sudden the lantern above the musician was caught by the ribbon of his reed. It danced and flung a hazy radiance on a divan in the shadow. He saw—started—half rose. His heart galloped, and the blood pounded in his quiet veins. Then he dropped again, crouched, and stared.

O lily-flowers and plum blossoms! O silver streams and dim-starred skies! O wine and roses, song and laughter! For there, kneeling on a mass of rugs, mazed and big-eyed, but understanding, was Lucy . . . his Lucy . . . his little maid. Through the dusk she must have felt his intent gaze upon her; for he crouched there, fascinated, staring into the now obscured corner where she knelt.

But the sickness which momentarily gripped him on finding in this place his snowy-breasted pearl passed and gave place to great joy. She was here; he would talk with her. Little English he had, but simple words, those with few gutturals, he had managed to pick up; so he rose, the masterful lover, and, with feline movements, crossed the nightmare chamber to claim his own.

If you wonder how Lucy came to be in this bagnio, the explanation is simple. Battling was in training. He had flogged her that day before starting work; he had then had a few brandies—not many; some eighteen or nineteen—and had locked the door of his room and taken the key.

Lucy was, therefore, homeless, and a girl somewhat older than Lucy, so old and so wise, as girls are in that region, saw in her a possible source of revenue. So there they were, and to them appeared Cheng.

From what horrors he saved her that night cannot be told, for her ways were too audaciously childish to hold her long from harm in such a place. What he brought to her was love and death.

For he sat by her. He looked at her—reverently yet passionately. He touched her—wistfully yet eagerly. He locked a finger in her wondrous hair. She did not start away; she did not tremble. She knew well what she had to be afraid of in that place; but she was not afraid of Cheng. She pierced the mephitic gloom and scanned his face. No, she was not afraid. His yellow hands, his yellow face, his smooth black hair . . . well, he was the first thing that had ever spoken soft words to her; the first thing that had ever laid a hand upon her that was not brutal; the first thing that had deferred in manner towards her as though she, too, had a right to live. She knew his words were sweet, though she did not understand them. Nor can they be set down. Half that he spoke was in village Chinese; the rest in a mangling of English which no distorted spelling could possibly reproduce.

But he drew her back against the cushions and asked her name, and she told him; and he inquired her age, and she told him; and he had then two beautiful words which came easily to his tongue. He repeated them again and again:

"Lucia . . . li'l Lucia. . . . Twelve. . . . Twelve." Musical phrases they were, dropping from his lips, and to the child who heard her name pronounced so lovingly, they were the lost heights of melody. She clung to him, and he to her. She held his strong arm in both of hers as they crouched on the divan, and nestled her cheek against his coat.

Well . . . he took her home to his wretched room.

"Li'l Lucia, come-a-home . . . Lucia."

His heart was on fire. As they slipped out of the noisomeness into the night air and crossed the West India Dock Road into Pennyfields, they passed unnoticed. It was late, for one thing, and for another . . . well, nobody cared particularly. His blood rang with soft music and the solemnity of drums, for surely he had found now what for many years he had sought—his world's one flower. Wanderer he was, from Tuan-tsen to Shanghai, Shanghai to Glasgow . . . Cardiff . . . Liverpool . . . London. He had dreamed often of the women of his native land; perchance one of them should be his flower. Women, indeed, there had been. Swatow . . . he had recollections of certain rose-winged hours in coast cities. At many places to which chance had led him a little bird had perched itself upon his heart, but so lightly and for so brief a while as hardly to be felt. But now—now he had found her in this alabaster Cockney child. So that he was glad and had great joy of himself and the blue and silver night, and the harsh flares of the Poplar Hippodrome.

You will observe that he had claimed her, but had not asked himself whether she were of an age for love. The white perfection of the child had captivated every sense. It may be that he forgot that he was in London and not in Tuan-tsen. It may be that he did not care. Of that nothing can be told. All that is known is that his love was a pure and holy thing. Of that we may be sure, for his worst enemies have said it.

Slowly, softly they mounted the stairs to his room, and with almost an obeisance he entered and drew her in. A bank of cloud raced to the east and a full moon thrust a sharp sword of light upon them. Silence lay over all Pennyfields. With a bird-like movement, she looked up at him—her face alight, her tiny hands upon his coat—clinging, wondering, trusting. He took her hand and kissed it; repeated the kiss upon her cheek and lip and little bosom, twining his fingers in her hair. Docilely, and echoing the smile of his lemon lips in a way that thrilled him almost to laughter, she returned his kisses impetuously, gladly.

He clasped the nestling to him. Bruised, tearful, with the love of life almost thrashed out of her, she had fluttered to him out of the evil night.

"O li'l Lucia!" And he put soft hands upon her, and smoothed her and crooned over her many gracious things in his flowered speech. So they stood in the moonlight, while she told him the story of her father, of her beatings, and starvings, and unhappiness.

"O li'l Lucia. . . . White Blossom. . . . Twelve. . . . Twelve years old!"

As he spoke, the clock above the Milwall Docks shot twelve crashing notes across the night. When the last echo died, he moved to a cupboard, and from it he drew strange things . . . formless masses of blue and gold, magical things of silk, and a vessel that was surely Aladdin's lamp, and a box of spices. He took these robes, and, with tender, reverent fingers, removed from his White Blossom the besmirched rags that covered her, and robed her again, and led her then to the heap of stuff that was his bed, and bestowed her safely.

For himself, he squatted on the floor before her, holding one grubby little hand. There he crouched all night, under the lyric moon, sleepless, watchful; and sweet content was his. He had fallen into an uncomfortable posture, and his muscles ached intolerably. But she slept, and he dared not move nor release her hand lest he should awaken her. Weary and trustful, she slept, knowing that the yellow man was kind and that she might sleep with no fear of a steel hand smashing the delicate structure of her dreams.

In the morning, when she awoke, still wearing her blue and yellow silk, she gave a cry of amazement. Cheng had been about. Many times had he glided up and down the two flights of stairs, and now at last his room was prepared for his princess. It was swept and garnished, and was an apartment worthy a maid who is loved by a poet-prince. There was a bead curtain. There were muslins of

pink and white. There were four bowls of flowers, clean, clear flowers to gladden the White Blossom and set off her sharp beauty. And there was a bowl of water, and a sweet lotion for the bruise on her cheek.

When she had risen, her prince ministered to her with rice and egg and tea. Cleansed and robed and calm, she sat before him, perched on the edge of many cushions as on a throne, with all the grace of the child princess in the story. She was a poem. The beauty hidden by neglect and fatigue shone out now more clearly and vividly, and from the head sunning over with curls to the small white feet, now bathed and sandalled, she seemed the living interpretation of a Chinese lyric. And she was his; her sweet self and her prattle, and her birdlike ways were all his own.

Oh, beautifully they loved. For two days he held her. Soft caresses from his yellow hands and long, devout kisses were all their demonstration. Each night he would tend her, as might mother to child; and each night he watched and sometimes slumbered at the foot of her couch.

But now there were those that ran to Battling at his training quarters across the river, with the news that his child had gone with a Chink—a yellow man. And Battling was angry. He discovered parental rights. He discovered indignation. A yellow man after his kid! He'd learn him. Battling did not like men who were not born in the same great country as himself. Particularly he disliked yellow men. His birth and education in Shadwell had taught him that of all creeping things that creep upon the earth the most insidious is the Oriental in the West. And a yellow man and a child. It was . . . as you might say . . . so . . . kind of . . . well, wasn't it? He bellowed that it was "unnacherel." The yeller man would go through it. Yeller! It was his supreme condemnation, his final epithet for all conduct of which he disapproved.

There was no doubt that he was extremely annoyed. He went to the Blue Lantern, in what was once Ratcliff Highway, and thumped the bar, and made all his world agree with him. And when they agreed with him he got angrier still. So that when, a few hours later, he climbed through the ropes at the Netherlands to meet Bud Tuffit for ten rounds, it was Bud's fight all the time, and to that bright boy's astonishment he was the victor on points at the end of the ten. Battling slouched out of the ring, still more determined to let the Chink have it where the chicken had the axe. He left the house with two pals and a black man, and a number of really inspired curses from his manager.

On the evening of the third day, then, Cheng slipped sleepily down the stairs to procure more flowers and more rice. The genial Ho Ling, who keeps the Canton store, held him in talk some little while, and he was gone from his room perhaps half-an-hour. Then he glided back, and climbed with happy feet the forty stairs to his temple of wonder.

With a push of a finger he opened the door, and the blood froze on his

cheek, the flowers fell from him. The temple was empty and desolate; White Blossom was gone. The muslin hangings were torn down and trampled underfoot. The flowers had been flung from their bowls about the floor, and the bowls lay in fifty fragments. The joss was smashed. The cupboard had been opened. Rice was scattered here and there. The little straight bed had been jumped upon by brute feet. Everything that could be smashed or violated had been so treated, and—horror of all—the blue and yellow silk robe had been rent in pieces, tied in grotesque knots, and slung derisively about the table legs.

I pray devoutly that you may never suffer what Cheng Huan suffered in that moment. The pangs of death, with no dying; the sickness of the soul which longs to escape and cannot; the imprisoned animal within the breast which struggles madly for a voice and finds none; all the agonies of all the ages—the agonies of every abandoned lover and lost woman, past and to come—all these things were his in that moment.

Then he found voice and gave a great cry, and men from below came up to him; and they told him how the man who boxed had been there with a black man; how he had torn the robes from his child, and dragged her down the stairs by her hair; and how he had shouted aloud for Cheng and had vowed to return and deal separately with him.

Now a terrible dignity came to Cheng, and the soul of his great fathers swept over him. He closed the door against them, and fell prostrate over what had been the resting-place of White Blossom. Those without heard strange sounds as of an animal in its last pains; and it was even so. Cheng was dying. The sacrament of his high and holy passion had been profaned; the last sanctuary of the Oriental—his soul dignity—had been assaulted. The love robes had been torn to ribbons; the veil of his temple cut down. Life was no longer possible; and life without his little lady, his White Blossom, was no longer desirable.

Prostrate he lay for the space of some five minutes. Then, in his face all the pride of accepted destiny, he arose. He drew together the little bed. With reverent hands he took the pieces of blue and yellow silk, kissing them and fondling them and placing them about the pillow. Silently he gathered up the flowers, and the broken earthenware, and burnt some prayer papers and prepared himself for death.

Now it is the custom among those of the sect of Cheng that the dying shall present love-gifts to their enemies; and when he had set all in order, he gathered his brown canvas coat about him, stole from the house, and set out to find Battling Burrows, bearing under the coat his love-gift to Battling. White Blossom he had no hope of finding. He had heard of Burrows many times; and he judged that, now that she was taken from him, never again would he hold those hands or touch that laughing hair. Nor, if he did, could it change things from what they were. Nothing that was not a dog could live in the face of this sacrilege.

As he came before the house in Pekin Street, where Battling lived, he murmured gracious prayers. Fortunately, it was a night of thick river mist, and through the enveloping velvet none could observe or challenge him. The main door was open, as are all doors in this district. He writhed across the step, and through to the back room, where again the door yielded to a touch.

Darkness. Darkness and silence, and a sense of frightful things. He peered through it. Then he fumbled under his jacket—found a match—struck it. An inch of candle stood on the mantelshelf. He lit it. He looked round. No sign of Burrows, but . . . Almost before he looked he knew what awaited him. But the sense of finality had kindly stunned him; he could suffer nothing more.

On the table lay a dog-whip. In the corner a belt had been flung. Half across the greasy couch lay White Blossom. A few rags of clothing were about her pale, slim body; her hair hung limp as her limbs; her eyes were closed. As Cheng drew nearer and saw the savage red rails that ran across and across the beloved body, he could not scream—he could not think. He dropped beside the couch. He laid gentle hands upon her, and called soft names. She was warm to the touch. The pulse was still.

Softly, oh, so softly, he bent over the little frame that had enclosed his friend-spirit, and his light kisses fell all about her. Then, with the undirected movements of a sleep-walker, he bestowed the rags decently about her, clasped her in strong arms, and crept silently into the night.

From Pekin Street to Pennyfields it is but a turn or two, and again he passed unobserved as he bore his tired bird back to her nest. He laid her upon the bed, and covered the lily limbs with the blue and yellow silks and strewed upon her a few of the trampled flowers. Then, with more kisses and prayers, he crouched beside her.

So, in the ghastly Limehouse morning, they were found—the dead child, and the Chink, kneeling beside her, with a sharp knife gripped in a vice-like hand, its blade far between his ribs.

Meantime, having vented his wrath on his prodigal daughter, Battling, still cross, had returned to the Blue Lantern, and there he stayed with a brandy tumbler in his fist, forgetful of an appointment at Premierland, whereby he should have been in the ring at ten o'clock sharp. For the space of an hour Chuck Lightfoot was going blasphemously to and fro in Poplar, seeking Battling and not finding him, and murmuring, in tearful tones: "Battling—you damman-blasted Battling—where are yeh?"

His opponent was in his corner sure enough, but there was no fight. For Battling lurched from the Blue Lantern to Pekin Street. He lurched into his happy home, and he cursed Lucy, and called for her. And finding no matches, he lurched to where he knew the couch should be, and flopped heavily down.

Now it is a peculiarity of the reptile tribe that its members are

impatient of being flopped on without warning. So, when Battling flopped, eighteen inches of writhing gristle upreared itself on the couch, and got home on him as Bud Tuffit had done the night before—one to the ear, one to the throat, and another to the forearm.

Battling went down and out.

And he, too, was found in the morning, with Cheng Huan's love-gift coiled about his neck.

THE GIFT OF THE MAGI

O. Henry

One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it. Which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the home. A furnished flat at $8 per week. It did not exactly beggar description, but it certainly had that word on the lookout for the mendicancy squad.

In the vestibule below was a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name "Mr. James Dillingham Young."

The "Dillingham" had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid $30 per week. Now, when the income was shrunk to $20, the letters of "Dillingham" looked blurred, as though they were thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D. But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above he was called "Jim" and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. Which is all very good.

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a grey cat walking a grey fence in a grey backyard. To-morrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only $1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only $1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling—something just a little bit near to

being worthy of the honor of being owned by Jim.

There was a pier-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier-glass in an $8 flat. A very thin and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence of longitudinal strips, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its colour within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her, rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: "Mme. Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds." One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly looked the "Sofronie."

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair," said Madame. "Take yer hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it."

Down rippled the brown cascade.

"Twenty dollars," said Madame, lifting the mass with a practised hand.

"Give it to me quick," said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum fob chain simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation—as all good things should do. It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value—the description applied to both. Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 87 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on

account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends—a mammoth task.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

"If Jim doesn't kill me," she said to herself, "before he takes a second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do—oh! what could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?"

At 7 o'clock the coffee was made and the frying pan was on the back of the stove hot and ready to cook the chops.

Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stair away down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit of saying little silent prayers about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered: "Please God, make him think I am still pretty."

The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two—and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stopped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della wriggled off the table and went for him.

"Jim, darling," she cried, "don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again—you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say 'Merry Christmas!' Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice—what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you."

"You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet even after the hardest mental labour.

"Cut it off and sold it," said Della. "Don't you like me just as well, anyhow? I'm me without my hair, ain't I?"

Jim looked about the room curiously.

"You say your hair is gone?" he said, with an air almost of idiocy.

"You needn't look for it," said Della. "It's sold, I tell you—sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered," she went on with a sudden serious sweetness, "but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?"

Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year—what is the difference? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be illuminated later on.

Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

"Don't make any mistake, Dell," he said, "about me. I don't think there's anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you'll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going a while at first."

White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! a quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat.

For there lay The Combs—the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped for long in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise shell, with jewelled rims—just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now, they were hers, but the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone.

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say: "My hair grows so fast, Jim!"

And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, "Oh, oh!"

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

"Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it."

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

"Dell," said he, "let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em a while. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on."

The magi, as you know, were wise men—wonderfully wise men—who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi.

THE STAR-CHILD

Oscar Wilde

Once upon a time two poor Woodcutters were making their way home through a great pine-forest. It was winter, and a night of bitter cold. The snow lay thick upon the ground, and upon the branches of the trees: the frost kept snapping the little twigs on either side of them, as they passed: and when they came to the Mountain-Torrent she was hanging motionless in air, for the Ice-King had kissed her.

So cold was it that even the animals and the birds did not know what to make of it.

"Ugh!" snarled the Wolf, as he limped through the brushwood with his tail between his legs, "this is perfectly monstrous weather. Why doesn't the Government look to it?"

"Weet! weet! weet!" twittered the green Linnets, "the old Earth is dead, and they have laid her out in her white shroud."

"The Earth is going to be married, and this is her bridal dress," whispered the Turtle-doves to each other. Their little pink feet were quite frost-bitten, but they felt that it was their duty to take a romantic view of the situation.

"Nonsense!" growled the Wolf. "I tell you that it is all the fault of the Government, and if you don't believe me I shall eat you." The Wolf had a thoroughly practical mind, and was never at a loss for a good argument.

"Well, for my own part," said the Woodpecker, who was a born philosopher, "I don't care an atomic theory for explanations. If a thing is so, it is so, and at present it is terribly cold."

Terribly cold it certainly was. The Little Squirrels, who lived inside the tall fir-tree, kept rubbing each other's noses to keep themselves warm, and the Rabbits curled themselves up in their holes, and did not venture even to look out of doors. The only people who seemed to enjoy it were the great horned Owls. Their feathers were quite stiff with rime, but they did not mind, and they rolled their large yellow eyes, and called out to each other across the forest, "Tu-whit! Tu-whoo! Tu-whit! Tu-whoo! what delightful weather we are having!"

On and on went the two Woodcutters, blowing lustily upon their fingers, and stamping with their huge iron-shod boots upon the caked snow. Once they sank into a deep drift, and came out as white as millers are, when the stones are grinding; and once they slipped on the hard smooth ice where the marsh-water was frozen, and their faggots fell out of their bundles, and they had to pick them up and bind them together again; and once they thought that they had lost their way, and a great terror seized on them, for they knew that the Snow is cruel to those who sleep in her arms. But they put their trust in the good Saint Martin, who watches over all travellers, and retraced their steps, and went warily,

and at last they reached the outskirts of the forest, and saw, far down in the valley beneath them, the lights of the village in which they dwelt.

So overjoyed were they at their deliverance that they laughed aloud, and the Earth seemed to them like a flower of silver, and the Moon like a flower of gold.

Yet, after that they had laughed they became sad, for they remembered their poverty, and one of them said to the other, "Why did we make merry, seeing that life is for the rich, and not for such as we are? Better that we had died of cold in the forest, or that some wild beast had fallen upon us and slain us."

"Truly," answered his companion, "much is given to some, and little is given to others. Injustice has parcelled out the world, nor is there equal division of aught save sorrow."

But as they were bewailing their misery to each other this strange thing happened. There fell from heaven a very bright and beautiful star. It slipped down the side of the sky, passing by the other stars in its course, and, as they watched it wondering, it seemed to them to sink behind a clump of willow-trees that stood hard by a little sheepfold no more than a stone's throw away.

"Why! there is a pot of gold for whoever finds it," they cried, and they set to and ran, so eager were they for the gold.

And one of them ran faster than his mate, and outstripped him, and forced his way through the willows, and came out on the other side, and lo! there was indeed a thing of gold lying on the white snow. So he hastened towards it, and stooping down placed his hands upon it, and it was a cloak of golden tissue, curiously wrought with stars, and wrapped in many folds. And he cried out to his comrade that he had found the treasure that had fallen from the sky, and when his comrade had come up, they sat them down in the snow, and loosened the folds of the cloak that they might divide the pieces of gold. But, alas! no gold was in it, nor silver, nor, indeed, treasure of any kind but only a little child who was asleep.

And one of them said to the other: "This is a bitter ending to our hope, nor have we any good fortune, for what doth a child profit to a man? Let us leave it here, and go our way, seeing that we are poor men, and have children of our own whose bread we may not give to another."

But his companion answered him: "Nay, but it were an evil thing to leave the child to perish here in the snow, and though I am as poor as thou art, and have many mouths to feed, and but little in the pot, yet will I bring it home with me, and my wife shall have care of it."

So very tenderly he took up the child, and wrapped the cloak around it to shield it from the harsh cold, and made his way down the hill to the village, his comrade marvelling much at his foolishness and softness of heart.

And when they came to the village, his comrade said to him, "Thou hast the child, therefore give me the cloak, for it is meet that we should share."

But he answered him: "Nay, for the cloak is neither mine nor thine, but the child's only," and he bade

him Godspeed, and went to his own house and knocked.

And when his wife opened the door and saw that her husband had returned safe to her, she put her arms round his neck and kissed him, and took from his back the bundle of faggots, and brushed the snow off his boots, and bade him come in.

But he said to her, "I have found something in the forest, and I have brought it to thee to have care of it," and he stirred not from the threshold.

"What is it?" she cried. "Show it to me, for the house is bare, and we have need of many things." And he drew the cloak back, and showed her the sleeping child.

"Alack, goodman!" she murmured, "have we not children enough of our own, that thou must needs bring a changeling to sit by the hearth? And who knows if it will not bring us bad fortune? And how shall we tend it?" And she was wroth against him.

"Nay, but it is a Star-Child," he answered; and he told her the strange manner of the finding of it.

But she would not be appeased, but mocked at him, and spoke angrily, and cried: "Our children lack bread, and shall we feed the child of another? Who is there who careth for us? And who giveth us food?"

"Nay, but God careth for the sparrows even, and feedeth them," he answered.

"Do not the sparrows die of hunger in the winter?" she asked. "And is it not winter now?" And the man answered nothing, but stirred not from the threshold.

And a bitter wind from the forest came in through the open door, and made her tremble, and she shivered, and said to him: "Wilt thou not close the door? There cometh a bitter wind into the house, and I am cold."

"Into a house where a heart is hard cometh there not always a bitter wind?" he asked. And the woman answered him nothing, but crept closer to the fire.

And after a time she turned round and looked at him, and her eyes were full of tears. And he came in swiftly, and placed the child in her arms, and she kissed it, and laid it in a little bed where the youngest of their own children was lying. And on the morrow the Woodcutter took the curious cloak of gold and placed it in a great chest, and a chain of amber that was round the child's neck his wife took and set it in the chest also.

So the Star-Child was brought up with the children of the Woodcutter, and sat at the same board with them, and was their playmate. And every year he became more beautiful to look at, so that all those who dwelt in the village were filled with wonder, for while they were swarthy and black-haired, he was white and delicate as sawn ivory, and his curls were like the rings of the daffodil. His lips, also were like the petals of red flower and his eyes were like violets by a river of pure water, and his body like the narcissus of a field where the mower comes not.

Yet did his beauty work him evil. For he grew proud, and cruel, and selfish. The children of the Woodcutter, and the other children of the village, he despised, saying that they were of mean parentage, while he was noble, being sprung from a Star, and

he made himself master over them, and called them his servants. No pity had he for the poor, or for those who were blind or maimed or in any way afflicted, but would cast stones at them and drive them forth on to the highway, and bid them beg their bread elsewhere, so that none save the outlaws came twice to that village to ask for alms. Indeed, he was one enamoured of beauty, and would mock at the weakly and ill-favoured, and make jest of them; and himself he loved, and in summer, when the winds were still, he would lie by the well in the priest's orchard and look down at the marvel of his own face, and laugh for the pleasure he had in his fairness.

Often did the Woodcutter and his wife chide him, and say: "We did not deal with thee as thou dealest with those who are left desolate, and have none to succour them. Wherefore art thou so cruel to all who need pity?"

Often did the old priest send for him, and seek to teach him the love of living things, saying to him: "The fly is thy brother. Do it no harm. The wild birds that roam through the forest have their freedom. Snare them not for thy pleasure. God made the blind-worm and the mole, and each has its place. Who art thou to bring pain into God's world? Even the cattle of the field praise Him."

But the Star-Child heeded not their words, but would frown and flout, and go back to his companions, and lead them. And his companions followed him, for he was fair, and fleet of foot, and could dance, and pipe, and make music. And whereever the Star-Child led them they followed, and whatever the Star-Child bade them do, that did they. And when he pierced with a sharp reed the dim eyes of the mole, they laughed, and when he cast stones at the leper they laughed also. And in all things he ruled them, and they became hard of heart, even as he was.

Now there passed one day through the village a poor beggar-woman. Her garments were torn and ragged, and her feet were bleeding from the rough road on which she had travelled and she was in very evil plight. And being weary she sat her down under a chestnut-tree to rest.

But when the Star-Child saw her, he said to his companions, "See! There sitteth a foul beggar-woman under that fair and green-leaved tree. Come, let us drive her hence, for she is ugly and ill-favoured."

So he came near and threw stones at her, and mocked her, and she looked at him with terror in her eyes, nor did she move her gaze from him. And when the Woodcutter, who was cleaving logs in a haggard hard by, saw what the Star-Child was doing, he ran up and rebuked him, and said to him: "Surely thou art hard at heart and knowest not mercy, for what evil has this poor woman done to thee that thou should'st treat her in this wise?"

And the Star-Child grew red with anger, and stamped his foot upon the ground and said, "Who art thou to question me what I do? I am no son of thine to do thy bidding."

"Thou speakest truly," answered the Woodcutter, "yet did I show

thee pity when I found thee in the forest."

And when the woman heard these words she gave a loud cry, and fell into a swoon. And the Woodcutter carried her to his own house, and his wife had care of her, and when she rose up from the swoon into which she had fallen, they set meat and drink before her, and bade her have comfort.

But she would neither eat nor drink, but said to the Woodcutter, "Didst thou not say that the child was found in the forest? And was it not ten years from this day?"

And the Woodcutter answered, "Yea, it was in the forest that I found him, and it is ten years from this day."

"And what signs didst thou find with him?" she cried. "Bare he not upon his neck a chain of amber? Was not round him a cloak of gold tissue broidered with stars?"

"Truly," answered the Woodcutter, "it was even as thou sayest." And he took the cloak and the amber chain from the chest where they lay, and showed them to her.

And when she saw them she wept for joy, and said, "He is my little son whom I lost in the forest. I pray thee send for him quickly, for in search of him have I wandered over the whole world."

So the Woodcutter and his wife went out and called to the Star-Child, and said to him, "Go into the house, and there shalt thou find thy mother, who is waiting for thee."

So he ran in, filled with wonder and great gladness. But when he saw her who was waiting there, he laughed scornfully and said, "Why, where is my mother? For I see none here but this vile beggar-woman."

And the woman answered him, "I am thy mother."

"Thou art mad to say so," cried the Star-Child angrily. "I am no son of thine, for thou art a beggar, and ugly, and in rags. Therefore get thee hence, and let me see thy foul face no more."

"Nay, but thou art indeed my little son, whom I bare in the forest," she cried, and she fell on her knees, and held out her arms to him. "The robbers stole thee from me, and left thee to die," she murmured, "but I recognized thee when I saw thee, and the signs also have I recognized, the cloak of golden tissue and the amber-chain. Therefore I pray thee come with me, for over the whole world have I wandered in search of thee. Come with me, my son, for I have need of thy love."

But the Star-Child stirred not from his place, but shut the doors of his heart against her, nor was there any sound heard save the sound of the woman weeping for pain.

And at last he spoke to her, and his voice was hard and bitter. "If in very truth thou art my mother," he said, "it had been better hadst thou stayed away, and not come here to bring me to shame, seeing that I thought I was the child of some Star, and not a beggar's child, as thou tellest me that I am. Therefore get thee hence, and let me see thee no more."

"Alas! my son," she cried, "wilt thou not kiss me before I go? For I have suffered much to find thee."

"Nay," said the Star-Child, "but thou art too foul to look at, and rather would I kiss the adder or the toad than thee."

So the woman rose up, and went away into the forest weeping bitterly, and when the Star-Child saw that she had gone, he was glad, and ran back to his playmates that he might play with them.

But when they beheld him coming, they mocked him and said, "Why, thou art as foul as the toad, and as loathsome as the adder. Get thee hence, for we will not suffer thee to play with us," and they drove him out of the garden.

And the Star-Child frowned and said to himself, "What is this that they say to me? I will go to the well of water and look into it, and it shall tell me of my beauty."

So he went to the well of water and looked into it, and lo! his face was as the face of a toad, and his body was scaled like an adder. And he flung himself down on the grass and wept, and said to himself, "Surely this has come upon me by reason of my sin. For I have denied my mother, and driven her away, and been proud and cruel to her. Wherefore I will go and seek her through the whole world, nor will I rest till I have found her."

And there came to him the little daughter of the Woodcutter, and she put her hand upon his shoulder and said, "What doth it matter if thou hast lost thy comeliness? Stay with us, and I will not mock at thee."

And he said to her, "Nay, but I have been cruel to my mother, and as a punishment has this evil been sent to me. Wherefore I must go hence, and wander through the world till I find her, and she give me her forgiveness."

So he ran away into the forest and called out to his mother to come to him, but there was no answer. All day long he called to her, and when the sun set he lay down to sleep on a bed of leaves, and the birds and the animals fled from him, for they remembered his cruelty, and he was alone save for the toad that watched him, and the slow adder that crawled past.

And in the morning he rose up, and plucked some bitter berries from the trees and ate them, and took his way through the great wood, weeping sorely. And of everything that he met he made enquiry if perchance they had seen his mother.

He said to the Mole, "Thou canst go beneath the earth. Tell me, is my mother there?"

And the Mole answered, "Thou hast blinded mine eyes. How should I know?"

He said to the Linnet, "Thou canst fly over the tops of the tall trees, and canst see the whole world. Tell me, canst thou see my mother?"

And the Linnet answered, "Thou hast clipt my wings for thy pleasure. How should I fly?"

And to the little Squirrel who lived in the fir-tree, and was lonely, he said, "Where is my mother?"

And the Squirrel answered, "Thou hast slain mine. Dost thou seek to slay thine also?"

And the Star-Child wept and bowed his head, and prayed forgiveness of God's things, and went on through the forest, seeking for the

beggar-woman. And on the third day he came to the other side of the forest and went down into the plain.

And when he passed through the villages the children mocked him, and threw stones at him, and the carlots would not suffer him even to sleep in the byres, lest he might bring mildew on the stored corn, so foul was he to look at, and their hired man drave him away, and there was none who had pity on him. Nor could he hear anywhere of the beggar-woman who was his mother, though for the space of three years he wandered over the world, and often seemed to see her on the road in front of him, and would call to her, and run after her till the sharp flints made his feet to bleed. But overtake her he could not, and those who dwelt by the way did ever deny that they had seen her, or any like to her, and they made sport of his sorrow.

For the space of three years he wandered over the world, and in the world there was neither love nor loving-kindness nor charity for him, but it was even such a world as he had made for himself in the days of his great pride.

And one evening he came to the gate of a strong-walled city that stood by a river, and, weary and footsore though he was, he made to enter it. But the soldiers who stood on guard dropped their halberts across the entrance, and said roughly to him, "What is thy business in the city?"

"I am seeking my mother," he answered, "and I pray ye to suffer me to pass, for it may be that she is in this city."

But they mocked at him, and one of them wagged a black beard, and set down his shield and cried, "Of a truth, thy mother will not be merry when she sees thee, for thou art more ill-favoured than the toad of the marsh, or the adder that crawls in the fen. Get thee gone. Get thee gone. Thy mother dwells not in this city."

And another, who held a yellow banner in his hand, said to him, "Who is thy mother, and wherefore art thou seeking for her?"

And he answered, "My mother is a beggar even as I am, and I have treated her evilly, and I pray ye to suffer me to pass that she may give me her forgiveness, if it be that she tarrieth in this city." But they would not, and pricked him with their spears.

And, as he turned away weeping, one whose armour was inlaid with gilt flowers, and on whose helmet couched a lion that had wings, came up and made enquiry of the soldiers who it was who had sought entrance. And they said to him, "It is a beggar and the child of a beggar, and we have driven him away."

"Nay," he cried, laughing, "but we will sell the foul thing for a slave, and his price shall be the price of a bowl of sweet wine."

And an old and evil-visaged man who was passing by called out, and said, "I will buy him for that price," and, when he had paid the price, he took the Star-Child by the hand and led him into the city.

And after that they had gone through many streets they came to a

little door that was set in a wall that was covered with a pomegranate tree. And the old man touched the door with a ring of graved jasper and it opened, and they went down five steps of brass into a garden filled with black poppies and green jars of burnt clay. And the old man took then from his turban a scarf of figured silk, and bound with it the eyes of the Star-Child, and drove him in front of him. And when the scarf was taken off his eyes, the Star-Child found himself in a dungeon, that was lit by a lantern of horn.

And the old man set before him some mouldy bread on a trencher and said, "Eat," and some brackish water in a cup and said, "Drink," and when he had eaten and drunk, the old man went out, locking the door behind him and fastening it with an iron chain.

And on the morrow the old man, who was indeed the subtlest of the magicians of Libya and had learned his art from one who dwelt in the tombs of the Nile, came in to him and frowned at him, and said, "In a wood that is nigh to the gate of this city of Giaours there are three pieces of gold. One is of white gold, and another is of yellow gold, and the gold of the third one is red. To-day thou shalt bring me the piece of white gold, and if thou bringest it not back, I will beat thee with a hundred stripes. Get thee away quickly, and at sunset I will be waiting for thee at the door of the garden. See that thou bringest the white gold, or it shall go ill with thee, for thou art my slave, and I have bought thee for the price of a bowl of sweet wine." And he bound the eyes of the Star-Child with the scarf of figured silk, and led him through the house, and through the garden of poppies, and up the five steps of brass. And having opened the little door with his ring he set him in the street.

And the Star-Child went out of the gate of the city, and came to the wood of which the Magician had spoken to him.

Now this wood was very fair to look at from without, and seemed full of singing birds and of sweet-scented flowers, and the Star-Child entered it gladly. Yet did its beauty profit him little, for wherever he went harsh briars and thorns shot up from the ground and encompassed him, and evil nettles stung him, and the thistle pierced him with her daggers, so that he was in sore distress. Nor could he anywhere find the piece of white gold of which the Magician had spoken, though he sought for it from morn to noon, and from noon to sunset. And at sunset he set his face towards home, weeping bitterly, for he knew what fate was in store for him.

But when he had reached the outskirts of the wood, he heard from a thicket a cry as of someone in pain. And forgetting his own sorrow he ran back to the place, and saw there a little Hare caught in a trap that some hunter had set for it.

And the Star-Child had pity on it, and released it, and said to it, "I am myself but a slave, yet may I give thee thy freedom."

And the Hare answered him, and said: "Surely thou hast given me

freedom, and what shall I give thee in return?"

And the Star-Child said to it, "I am seeking for a piece of white gold, nor can I anywhere find it, and if I bring it not to my master he will beat me."

"Come thou with me," said the Hare, "and I will lead thee to it, for I know where it is hidden, and for what purpose."

So the Star-Child went with the Hare, and lo! in the cleft of a great oak-tree he saw the piece of white gold that he was seeking. And he was filled with joy, and seized it, and said to the Hare, "The service that I did to thee thou hast rendered back again many times over, and the kindness that I showed thee thou hast repaid a hundred fold."

"Nay," answered the Hare, "but as thou dealt with me, so I did deal with thee," and it ran away swiftly, and the Star-Child went towards the city.

Now at the gate of the city there was seated one who was a leper. Over his face hung a cowl of grey linen and through the eyelets his eyes gleamed like red coals. And when he saw the Star-Child coming, he struck upon a wooden bowl, and clattered his bell, and called out to him, and said, "Give me a piece of money, or I must die of hunger. For they have thrust me out of the city, and there is no one who has pity on me."

"Alas!" cried the Star-Child, "I have but one piece of money in my wallet, and if I bring it not to my master he will beat me, for I am his slave."

But the leper entreated him, and prayed of him, till the Star-Child had pity, and gave him the piece of white gold.

And when he came to the Magician's house, the Magician opened to him, and brought him in, and said to him, "Hast thou the piece of white gold?" And the Star-Child answered, "I have it not." So the Magician fell upon him, and beat him, and set before him an empty trencher, and said, "Eat," and an empty cup, and said, "Drink," and flung him again into the dungeon.

And on the morrow the Magician came to him, and said, "If to-day thou bringest me not the piece of yellow gold, I will surely keep thee as my slave, and give thee three hundred stripes."

So the Star-Child went to the wood, and all day long he searched for the piece of yellow gold, but nowhere could he find it. And at sunset he sat him down and began to weep, and as he was weeping there came to him the little Hare that he had rescued from the trap.

And the Hare said to him, "Why art thou weeping? And what dost thou seek in the wood?"

And the Star-Child answered, "I am seeking for a piece of yellow gold that is hidden here, and if I find it not my master will beat me, and keep me as a slave."

"Follow me," cried the Hare, and it ran through the wood till it came to a pool of water. And at the bottom of the pool the piece of yellow gold was lying.

"How shall I thank thee?" said the Star-Child, "for lo! this is the

second time that you have succoured me."

"Nay, but thou hadst pity on me first," said the Hare, and it ran away swiftly.

And the Star-Child took the piece of yellow gold, and put it in his wallet, and hurried to the city. But the leper saw him coming, and ran to meet him, and knelt down and cried, "Give me a piece of money or I shall die of hunger."

And the Star-Child said to him, "I have in my wallet but one piece of yellow gold, and if I bring it not to my master he will beat me and keep me as his slave."

But the leper entreated him sore, so that the Star-Child had pity on him, and gave him the piece of yellow gold.

And when he came to the Magician's house, the Magician opened to him, and brought him in, and said to him, "Hast thou the piece of yellow gold?" And the Star-Child said to him, "I have it not." So the Magician fell upon him, and beat him, and loaded him with chains, and cast him again into the dungeon.

And on the morrow the Magician came to him, and said, "If to-day thou bringest me the piece of red gold I will set thee free, but if thou bringest it not I will surely slay thee."

So the Star-Child went to the wood, and all day long he searched for the piece of red gold, but nowhere could he find it. And at evening he sat him down, and wept, and as he was weeping there came to him the little Hare.

And the Hare said to him, "The piece of red gold that thou seekest is in the cavern that is behind thee. Therefore weep no more but be glad."

"How shall I reward thee?" cried the Star-Child, "for lo! this is the third time thou hast succoured me."

"Nay, but thou hadst pity on me first," said the Hare, and it ran away swiftly.

And the Star-Child entered the cavern, and in its farthest corner he found the piece of red gold. So he put it in his wallet, and hurried to the city. And the leper seeing him coming, stood in the centre of the road, and cried out, and said to him, "Give me the piece of red money, or I must die," and the Star-Child had pity on him again, and gave him the piece of red gold, saying, "Thy need is greater than mine." Yet was his heart heavy, for he knew what evil fate awaited him.

But lo! as he passed through the gate of the city, the guards bowed down and made obeisance to him, saying, "How beautiful is our lord!" and a crowd of citizens followed him, and cried out, "Surely there is none so beautiful in the whole world!" so that the Star-Child wept, and said to himself, "They are mocking me, and making light of my misery." And so large was the concourse of the people, that he lost the threads of his way, and found himself at last in a great square, in which there was a palace of a King.

And the gate of the palace opened, and the priests and the high officers of the city ran forth to meet him, and they abased themselves before him, and said, "Thou art our lord for whom we have been waiting, and the son of our King."

And the Star-Child answered them and said, "I am no king's son, but the child of a poor beggar-woman. And how say ye that I am beautiful, for I know that I am evil to look at?"

Then he, whose armour was inlaid with gilt flowers, and on whose helmet couched a lion that had wings, held up a shield, and cried, "How saith my lord that he is not beautiful?"

And the Star-Child looked, and lo! his face was even as it had been, and his comeliness had come back to him, and he saw that in his eyes which he had not seen there before.

And the priests and the high officers knelt down and said to him, "It was prophesied of old that on this day should come he who was to rule over us. Therefore, let our lord take this crown and this sceptre, and be in his justice and mercy our King over us."

But he said to them, "I am not worthy, for I have denied the mother who bare me, nor may I rest till I have found her, and known her forgiveness. Therefore, let me go, for I must wander again over the world, and may not tarry here, though ye bring me the crown and the sceptre." And as he spake he turned his face from them towards the street that led to the gate of the city, and lo! amongst the crowd that pressed round the soldiers, he saw the beggar-woman who was his mother, and at her side stood the leper, who had sat by the road.

And a cry of joy broke from his lips, and he ran over, and kneeling down he kissed the wounds on his mother's feet, and wet them with his tears. He bowed his head in the dust, and sobbing, as one whose heart might break, he said to her: "Mother, I denied thee in the hour of my pride. Accept me in the hour of my humility. Mother, I gave thee hatred. Do thou give me love. Mother, I rejected thee. Receive thy child now." But the beggar-woman answered him not a word.

And he reached out his hands, and clasped the white feet of the leper, and said to him: "Thrice did I give thee of my mercy. Bid my mother speak to me once." But the leper answered him not a word.

And he sobbed again, and said: "Mother, my suffering is greater than I can bear. Give me thy forgiveness, and let me go back to the forest." And the beggar-woman put her hand on his head, and said to him, "Rise," and the leper put his hand on his head, and said to him "Rise," also.

And he rose up from his feet, and looked at them, and lo! they were a King and a Queen.

And the Queen said to him, "This is thy father whom thou hast succoured."

And the King said, "This is thy mother, whose feet thou hast washed with thy tears."

And they fell on his neck and kissed him, and brought him into the palace, and clothed him in fair raiment, and set the crown upon his head, and the sceptre in his hand, and over the city that stood by the river he ruled, and was its lord. Much justice and mercy did he show to all, and the evil Magician he banished, and to the Woodcutter and his wife he sent many rich gifts, and to their children he gave high honour. Nor would he suffer any to be cruel to bird or beast,

but taught love and loving-kindness and charity, and to the poor he gave bread, and to the naked he gave raiment, and there was peace and plenty in the land.

Yet ruled he not long, so great had been his suffering, and so bitter the fire of his testing, for after the space of three years he died. And he who came after him ruled evilly.

THE THREE STRANGERS

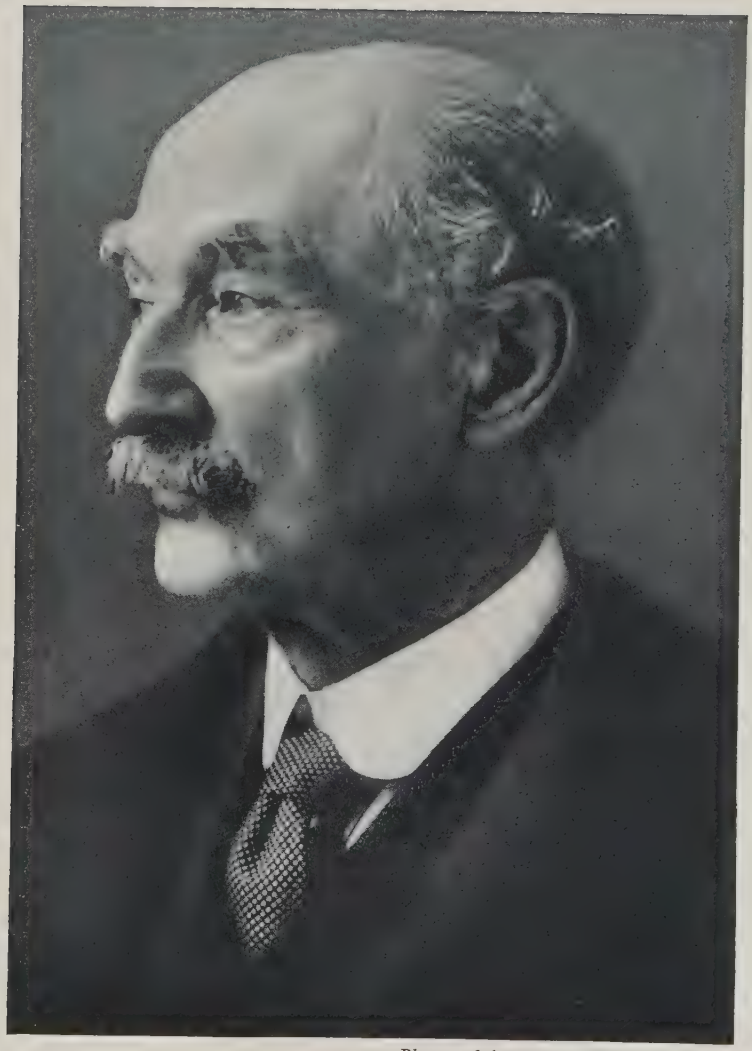
Thomas Hardy

Among the few features of agricultural England which retain an appearance but little modified by the lapse of centuries, may be reckoned the high, grassy and furzy downs, coombs, or ewe-leases, as they are indifferently called, that fill a large area of certain counties in the south and south-west. If any mark of human occupation is met with hereon, it usually takes the form of the solitary cottage of some shepherd.

Fifty years ago such a lonely cottage stood on such a down, and may possibly be standing there now. In spite of its loneliness, however, the spot, by actual measurement, was not more than five miles from a county-town. Yet that affected it little. Five miles of irregular upland, during the long inimical seasons, with their sleets, snows, rains, and mists, afford withdrawing space enough to isolate a Timon or a Nebuchadnezzar; much less, in fair weather, to please that less repellent tribe, the poets, philosophers, artists, and others who "conceive and meditate of pleasant things."

Some old earthen camp or barrow, some clump of trees, at least some starved fragment of ancient hedge is usually taken advantage of in the erection of these forlorn dwellings. But, in the present case, such a kind of shelter had been disregarded. Higher Crowstairs, as the house was called, stood quite detached and undefended. The only reason for its precise situation seemed to be the crossing of two footpaths at right angles hard by, which may have crossed there and thus for a good five hundred years. Hence the house was exposed to the elements on all sides. But, though the wind up here blew unmistakably when it did blow, and the rain hit hard whenever it fell, the various weathers of the winter season were not quite so formidable on the coomb as they were imagined to be by dwellers on low ground. The raw rimes were not so pernicious as in the hollows, and the frosts were scarcely so severe. When the shepherd and his family who tenanted the house were pitied for their sufferings from the exposure, they said that upon the whole they were less inconvenienced by "wuzzes and flames" (hoarses and phlegms) than when they had lived by the stream of a snug neighbouring valley.

The night of March 28, 182–, was precisely one of the nights that were wont to call forth these expressions of commiseration. The level rainstorm smote walls, slopes, and hedges



Photograph from Ewing Galloway, New York

Thomas Hardy

like the clothyard shafts of Senlac and Crecy. Such sheep and outdoor animals as had no shelter stood with their buttocks to the winds; while the tails of little birds trying to roost on some scraggy thorn were blown inside-out like umbrellas. The gable-end of the cottage was stained with wet, and the eavesdroppings flapped against the wall. Yet never was commiseration for the shepherd more misplaced. For that cheerful rustic was entertaining a large party in glorification of the christening of his second girl.

The guests had arrived before the rain began to fall, and they were all now assembled in the chief or living room of the dwelling. A glance into the apartment at eight o'clock on this eventful evening would have resulted in the opinion that it was as cosy and comfortable a nook as could be wished for in boisterous weather. The calling of its inhabitant was proclaimed by a number of highly-polished sheep-crooks without stems that were hung ornamentally over the fireplace, the curl of each shining crook varying from the antiquated type engraved in the patriarchal pictures of old family Bibles to the most approved fashion of the last local sheep-fair. The room was lighted by half-a-dozen candles, having wicks only a trifle smaller than the grease which enveloped them, in candlesticks that were never used but at high-days, holy-days, and family feasts. The lights were scattered about the room, two of them standing on the chimney-piece. This position of candles was in itself significant. Candles on the chimney-piece always meant a party.

On the hearth, in front of a backbrand to give substance, blazed a fire of thorns, that crackled "like the laughter of the fool."

Nineteen persons were gathered here. Of these, five women, wearing gowns of various bright hues, sat in chairs along the wall; girls shy and not shy filled the window-bench; four men, including Charley Jake the hedge-carpenter, Elijah New the parish-clerk, and John Pitcher, a neighbouring dairyman, the shepherd's father-in-law, lolled in the settle; a young man and maid, who were blushing over tentative *pourparlers* on a life-companionship, sat beneath the corner-cupboard; and an elderly engaged man of fifty or upward moved restlessly about from spots where his betrothed was not to the spot where she was. Enjoyment was pretty general, and so much the more prevailed in being unhampered by conventional restrictions. Absolute confidence in each other's good opinion begat perfect ease, while the finishing stroke of manner, amounting to a truly princely serenity, was lent to the majority by the absence of any expression or trait denoting that they wished to get on in the world, enlarge their minds, or do any eclipsing thing whatever—which nowadays so generally nips the bloom and *bonhomie* of all except the two extremes of the social scale.

Shepherd Fennel had married well, his wife being a dairyman's daughter from a vale at a distance, who brought fifty guineas in her pocket—and kept them there, till they should be required for ministering to the

needs of a coming family. This frugal woman had been somewhat exercised as to the character that should be given to the gathering. A sit-still party had its advantages; but an undisturbed position of ease in chairs and settles was apt to lead on the men to such an unconscionable deal of toping that they would sometimes fairly drink the house dry. A dancing-party was the alternative; but this, while avoiding the foregoing objection on the score of good drink, had a counterbalancing disadvantage in the matter of good victuals, the ravenous appetites engendered by the exercise causing immense havoc in the buttery. Shepherdess Fennel fell back upon the intermediate plan of mingling short dances with short periods of talk and singing, so as to hinder any ungovernable rage in either. But this scheme was entirely confined to her own gentle mind: the shepherd himself was in the mood to exhibit the most reckless phases of hospitality.

The fiddler was a boy of those parts, about twelve years of age, who had a wonderful dexterity in jigs and reels, though his fingers were so small and short as to necessitate a constant shifting for the high notes, from which he scrambled back to the first position with sounds not of unmixed purity of tone. At seven the shrill tweedle-dee of this youngster had begun, accompanied by a booming ground-bass from Elijah New, the parish-clerk, who had thoughtfully brought with him his favourite musical instrument, the serpent. Dancing was instantaneous, Mrs. Fennel privately enjoining the players on no account to let the dance exceed the length of a quarter of an hour.

But Elijah and the boy, in the excitement of their position, quite forgot the injunction. Moreover, Oliver Giles, a man of seventeen, one of the dancers, who was enamoured of his partner, a fair girl of thirty-three rolling years, had recklessly handed a new crown-piece to the musicians, as a bribe to keep going as long as they had muscle and wind. Mrs. Fennel, seeing the steam begin to generate on the countenances of her guests, crossed over and touched the fiddler's elbow and put her hand on the serpent's mouth. But they took no notice, and fearing she might lose her character of genial hostess if she were to interfere too markedly, she retired and sat down helpless. And so the dance whizzed on with cumulative fury, the performers moving in their planet-like courses, direct and retrograde, from apogee to perigee, till the hand of the well-kicked clock at the bottom of the room had travelled over the circumference of an hour.

While these cheerful events were in course of enactment within Fennel's pastoral dwelling, an incident having considerable bearing on the party had occurred in the gloomy night without. Mrs. Fennel's concern about the growing fierceness of the dance corresponded in point of time with the ascent of a human figure to the solitary hill of Higher Crowstairs from the direction of the distant town. This personage strode on through the rain without a pause, following the little-worn path which,

further on in its course, skirted the shepherd's cottage.

It was nearly the time of full moon, and on this account, though the sky was lined with a uniform sheet of dripping cloud, ordinary objects out of doors were readily visible. The sad wan light revealed the lonely pedestrian to be a man of supple frame; his gait suggested that he had somewhat passed the period of perfect and instinctive agility, though not so far as to be otherwise than rapid of motion when occasion required. At a rough guess, he might have been about forty years of age. He appeared tall, but a recruiting sergeant, or other person accustomed to the judging of men's heights by the eye, would have discerned that this was chiefly owing to his gauntness, and that he was not more than five-feet-eight or nine.

Notwithstanding the regularity of his tread, there was caution in it, as in that of one who mentally feels his way; and despite the fact that it was not a black coat nor a dark garment of any sort that he wore, there was something about him which suggested that he naturally belonged to the black-coated tribes of men. His clothes were of fustian, and his boots hobnailed, yet in his progress he showed not the mud-accustomed bearing of hobnailed and fustianed peasantry.

By the time that he had arrived abreast of the shepherd's premises the rain came down, or rather came along, with yet more determined violence. The outskirts of the little settlement partially broke the force of wind and rain, and this induced him to stand still. The most salient of the shepherd's domestic erections was an empty sty at the forward corner of his hedgeless garden, for in these latitudes the principle of masking the homelier features of your establishment by a conventional frontage was unknown. The traveller's eye was attracted to this small building by the pallid shine of the wet slates that covered it. He turned aside, and, finding it empty, stood under the pent-roof for shelter.

While he stood, the boom of the serpent within the adjacent house, and the lesser strains of the fiddler, reached the spot as an accompaniment to the surging hiss of the flying rain on the sod, its louder beating on the cabbage-leaves of the garden, on the eight or ten beehives just discernible by the path, and its dripping from the eaves into a row of buckets and pans that had been placed under the walls of the cottage. For at Higher Crowstairs, as at all such elevated domiciles, the grand difficulty of housekeeping was an insufficiency of water; and a casual rainfall was utilized by turning out, as catchers, every utensil that the house contained. Some queer stories might be told of the contrivances for economy in suds and dish-waters that are absolutely necessitated in upland habitations during the droughts of summer. But at this season there were no such exigencies; a mere acceptance of what the skies bestowed was sufficient for an abundant store.

At last the notes of the serpent ceased and the house was silent. This cessation of activity aroused the solitary pedestrian from the reverie

into which he had lapsed, and, emerging from the shed, with an apparently new intention, he walked up the path to the house-door. Arrived here, his first act was to kneel down on a large stone beside the row of vessels, and to drink a copious draught from one of them. Having quenched his thirst he rose and lifted his hand to knock, but paused with his eye upon the panel. Since the dark surface of the wood revealed absolutely nothing, it was evident that he must be mentally looking through the door, as if he wished to measure thereby all the possibilities that a house of this sort might include, and how they might bear upon the question of his entry.

In his indecision he turned and surveyed the scene around. Not a soul was anywhere visible. The garden-path stretched downward from his feet, gleaming like the track of a snail; the roof of the little well (mostly dry), the well-cover, the top rail of the garden-gate, were varnished with the same dull liquid glaze; while, far away in the vale, a faint whiteness of more than usual extent showed that the rivers were high in the meads. Beyond all this winked a few bleared lamplights through the beating drops—lights that denoted the situation of the county-town from which he had appeared to come. The absence of all notes of life in that direction seemed to clinch his intentions, and he knocked at the door.

Within, a desultory chat had taken the place of movement and musical sound. The hedge-carpenter was suggesting a song to the company, which nobody just then was inclined to undertake, so that the knock afforded a not unwelcome diversion.

"Walk in!" said the shepherd promptly.

The latch clicked upward, and out of the night our pedestrian appeared upon the door-mat. The shepherd arose, snuffed two of the nearest candles, and turned to look at him.

Their light disclosed that the stranger was dark in complexion and not unprepossessing as to feature. His hat, which for a moment he did not remove, hung low over his eyes, without concealing that they were large, open, and determined, moving with a flash rather than a glance round the room. He seemed pleased with his survey, and, baring his shaggy head, said, in a rich deep voice, "The rain is so heavy, friends, that I ask leave to come in and rest awhile."

"To be sure, stranger," said the shepherd. "And faith, you've been lucky in choosing your time, for we are having a bit of a fling for a glad cause—though, to be sure, a man could hardly wish that glad cause to happen more than once a year."

"Nor less," spoke up a woman. "For 'tis best to get your family over and done with, as soon as you can, so as to be all the earlier out of the fag o't."

"And what may be this glad cause?" asked the stranger.

"A birth and christening," said the shepherd.

The stranger hoped his host might not be made unhappy either by too many or too few of such episodes, and being invited by a gesture to a pull

at the mug, he readily acquiesced. His manner, which, before entering, had been so dubious, was now altogether that of a careless and candid man.

"Late to be traipsing athwart this coomb—hey?" said the engaged man of fifty.

"Late it is, master, as you say.—I'll take a seat in the chimney-corner, if you have nothing to urge against it, ma'am; for I am a little moist on the side that was next the rain."

Mrs. Shepherd Fennel assented, and made room for the self-invited comer, who, having got completely inside the chimney-corner, stretched out his legs and his arms with the expansiveness of a person quite at home.

"Yes, I am rather cracked in the vamp," he said freely, seeing that the eyes of the shepherd's wife fell upon his boots, "and I am not well fitted either. I have had some rough times lately, and have been forced to pick up what I can get in the way of wearing, but I must find a suit better fit for working-days when I reach home."

"One of hereabouts?" she inquired.

"Not quite that—further up the country."

"I thought so. And so be I; and by your tongue you come from my neighbourhood."

"But you would hardly have heard of me," he said quickly. "My time would be long before yours, ma'am, you see."

This testimony to the youthfulness of his hostess had the effect of stopping her cross-examination.

"There is only one thing more wanted to make me happy," continued the new-comer. "And that is a little baccy, which I am sorry to say I am out of."

"I'll fill your pipe," said the shepherd.

"I must ask you to lend me a pipe likewise."

"A smoker, and no pipe about 'ee?"

"I have dropped it somewhere on the road."

The shepherd filled and handed him a new clay pipe, saying, as he did so, "Hand me your baccy box—I'll fill that too, now I am about it."

The man went through the movement of searching his pockets.

"Lost that too?" said his entertainer, with some surprise.

"I am afraid so," said the man with some confusion. "Give it to me in a screw of paper." Lighting his pipe at the candle with a suction that drew the whole flame into the bowl, he resettled himself in the corner and bent his looks upon the faint steam from his damp legs, as if he wished to say no more.

Meanwhile the general body of guests had been taking little notice of this visitor by reason of an absorbing discussion in which they were engaged with the band about a tune for the next dance. The matter being settled, they were about to stand up when an interruption came in the shape of another knock at the door.

At sound of the same the man in the chimney-corner took up the poker and began stirring the brands as if doing it thoroughly were the one aim of his existence; and a second time the shepherd said, "Walk in!"

In a moment another man stood upon the straw-woven door-mat. He too was a stranger.

This individual was one of a type radically different from the first. There was more of the commonplace in his manner, and a certain jovial cosmopolitanism sat upon his features. He was several years older than the first arrival, his hair being slightly frosted, his eyebrows bristly, and his whiskers cut back from his cheeks. His face was rather full and flabby, and yet it was not altogether a face without power. A few grog-blossoms marked the neighbourhood of his nose. He flung back his long drab greatcoat, revealing that beneath it he wore a suit of cinder-gray shade throughout, large heavy seals, of some metal or other that would take a polish, dangling from his fob as his only personal ornament. Shaking the water-drops from his low-crowned glazed hat, he said, "I must ask for a few minutes' shelter, comrades, or I shall be wetted to my skin before I get to Casterbridge."

"Make yourself at home, master," said the shepherd, perhaps a trifle less heartily than on the first occasion. Not that Fennel had the least tinge of niggardliness in his composition; but the room was far from large, spare chairs were not numerous, and damp companions were not altogether desirable at close quarters for the women and girls in their bright-colored gowns.

However, the second comer, after taking off his greatcoat, and hanging his hat on a nail in one of the ceiling-beams as if he had been specially invited to put it there, advanced and sat down at the table. This had been pushed so closely into the chimney-corner, to give all available room to the dancers, that its inner edge grazed the elbow of the man who had ensconced himself by the fire; and thus the two strangers were brought into close companionship. They nodded to each other by way of breaking the ice of unacquaintance, and the first stranger handed his neighbor the family mug—a huge vessel of brown ware, having its upper edge worn away like a threshold by the rub of whole generations of thirsty lips that had gone the way of all flesh, and bearing the following inscription burnt upon its rotund side in yellow letters:—

THERE IS NO FUN
UNTILL I CUM.

The other man, nothing loth, raised the mug to his lips, and drank on, and on, and on—till a curious blueness overspread the countenance of the shepherd's wife, who had regarded with no little surprise the first stranger's free offer to the second of what did not belong to him to dispense.

"I knew it!" said the toper to the shepherd with much satisfaction. "When I walked up your garden before coming in, and saw the hives all of a row, I said to myself, 'Where there's bees there's honey, and where there's honey there's mead.' But mead of such a truly comfortable sort as this I really didn't expect to meet in my older days." He took yet another pull at the mug, till it assumed an ominous elevation.

"Glad you enjoy it!" said the shepherd warmly.

"It is goodish mead," assented Mrs. Fennel, with an absence of enthusiasm which seemed to say that it was possible to buy praise for one's cellar at too heavy a price. "It is trouble enough to make—and really I hardly think we shall make any more. For honey sells well, and we ourselves can make shift with a drop o' small mead and metheglin for common use from the comb-washings."

"O, but you'll never have the heart!" reproachfully cried the stranger in cinder-gray, after taking up the mug a third time and setting it down empty. "I love mead, when 'tis old like this, as I love to go to church o' Sundays, or to relieve the needy any day of the week."

"Ha, ha, ha!" said the man in the chimney-corner, who, in spite of the taciturnity induced by the pipe of tobacco, could not or would not refrain from this slight testimony to his comrade's humor.

Now the old mead of those days, brewed of the purest first-year or maiden honey, four pounds to the gallon—with its due complement of white of eggs, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, mace, rosemary, yeast, and processes of working, bottling, and cellaring—tasted remarkably strong; but it did not taste so strong as it actually was. Hence, presently, the stranger in cinder-gray at the table, moved by its creeping influence, unbuttoned his waistcoat, threw himself back in his chair, spread his legs, and made his presence felt in various ways.

"Well, well, as I say," he resumed, "I am going to Casterbridge, and to Casterbridge I must go. I should have been almost there by this time; but the rain drove me into your dwelling, and I'm not sorry for it."

"You don't live in Casterbridge?" said the shepherd.

"Not as yet; though I shortly mean to move there."

"Going to set up in trade, perhaps?"

"No, no," said the shepherd's wife. "It is easy to see that the gentleman is rich, and don't want to work at anything."

The cinder-gray stranger paused as if to consider whether he would accept that definition of himself. He presently rejected it by answering, "Rich is not quite the word for me, dame. I do work, and I must work. And even if I only get to Casterbridge by midnight I must begin work there at eight to-morrow morning. Yes, het or wet, blow or snow, famine or sword, my day's work to-morrow must be done."

"Poor man! Then, in spite o' seeming, you be worse off than we?" replied the shepherd's wife.

"'Tis the nature of my trade, men and maidens. 'Tis the nature of my trade more than my poverty. . . . But really and truly I must up and off, or I shan't get a lodging in the town." However, the speaker did not move, and directly added, "There's time for one more draught of friendship before I go; and I'd perform it at once if the mug were not dry."

"Here's a mug o' small," said Mrs. Fennel. "Small, we call it, though to be sure 'tis only the first wash o' the combs."

"No," said the stranger disdainfully. "I won't spoil your first kindness by partaking o' your second."

"Certainly not," broke in Fennel. "We don't increase and multiply every day, and I'll fill the mug again." He went away to the dark place under the stairs where the barrel stood. The shepherdess followed him.

"Why should you do this?" she said reproachfully, as soon as they were alone. "He's emptied it once, though it held enough for ten people; and now he's not contended wi' the small, but must needs call for more o' the strong! And a stranger unbeknown to any of us. For my part, I don't like the look o' the man at all."

"But he's in the house, my honey; and 'tis a wet night, and a christening. Daze it, what's a cup of mead more or less? There'll be plenty more next bee-burning."

"Very well—this time, then," she answered, looking wistfully at the barrel. "But what is the man's calling, and where is he one of, that he should come in and join us like this?"

"I don't know. I'll ask him again."

The catastrophe of having the mug drained dry at one pull by the stranger in cinder-gray was effectually guarded against this time by Mrs. Fennel. She poured out his allowance in a small cup, keeping the large one at a discreet distance from him. When he had tossed off his portion the shepherd renewed his inquiry about the stranger's occupation.

The latter did not immediately reply, and the man in the chimney-corner, with sudden demonstrativeness, said, "Anybody may know my trade—I'm a wheelwright."

"A very good trade for these parts," said the shepherd.

"And anybody may know mine—if they've the sense to find it out," said the stranger in cinder-gray.

"You may generally tell what a man is by his claws," observed the hedge-carpenter, looking at his own hands. "My fingers be as full of thorns as an old pin-cushion is of pins."

The hands of the man in the chimney-corner instinctively sought the shade, and he gazed into the fire as he resumed his pipe. The man at the table took up the hedge-carpenter's remark, and added smartly, "True; but the oddity of my trade is that, instead of setting a mark upon me, it sets a mark upon my customers."

No observation being offered by anybody in elucidation of this enigma, the shepherd's wife once more called for a song. The same obstacles presented themselves as at the former time—one had no voice, another had forgotten the first verse. The stranger at the table, whose soul had now risen to a good working temperature, relieved the difficulty by exclaiming that, to start the company, he would sing himself. Thrusting one thumb into the arm-hole of his waistcoat, he waved the other hand in the air, and, with an extemporizing gaze at the shining sheep-crooks above the mantelpiece, began:—

O my trade it is the rarest one,
Simple shepherds all—
My trade is a sight to see;
For my customers I tie, and take them up on high,
And waft 'em to a far countree!

The room was silent when he had finished the verse—with one exception, that of the man in the chimney-

corner, who, at the singer's word, "Chorus!" joined him in a deep bass voice of musical relish—

And waft 'em to a far countree!

Oliver Giles, John Pitcher the dairyman, the parish-clerk, the engaged man of fifty, the row of young women against the wall, seemed lost in thought not of the gayest kind. The shepherd looked meditatively on the ground, the shepherdess gazed keenly at the singer, and with some suspicion; she was doubting whether this stranger were merely singing an old song from recollection, or was composing one there and then for the occasion. All were as perplexed at the obscure revelation as the guests at Belshazzar's Feast, except the man in the chimney-corner, who quietly said, "Second verse, stranger," and smoked on.

The singer thoroughly moistened himself from his lips inwards, and went on with the next stanza as requested:—

My tools are but common ones,
Simple shepherds all—
My tools are no sight to see:
A little hempen string, and a post whereon to swing,
Are implements enough for me!

Shepherd Fennel glanced round. There was no longer any doubt that the stranger was answering his question rhythmically. The guests one and all started back with suppressed exclamations. The young woman engaged to the man of fifty fainted half-way, and would have proceeded, but finding him wanting in alacrity for catching her she sat down trembling.

"O, he's the ———!" whispered the people in the background, mentioning the name of an ominous public officer. "He's come to do it! 'Tis to be at Casterbridge jail tomorrow—the man for sheep-stealing —the poor clock-maker we heard of, who used to live away at Shottsford and had no work to do—Timothy Summers, whose family were a-starving, and so he went out of Shottsford by the high-road, and took a sheep in open daylight, defying the farmer and the farmer's wife and the farmer's lad, and every man jack among 'em. He" (and they nodded towards the stranger of the deadly trade) "is come from up the country to do it because there's not enough to do in his own county-town, and he's got the place here now our own county man's dead; he's going to live in the same cottage under the prison wall."

The stranger in cinder-gray took no notice of this whispered string of observations, but again wetted his lips. Seeing that his friend in the chimney-corner was the only one who reciprocated his joviality in any way, he held out his cup towards that appreciative comrade, who also held out his own. They clinked together, the eyes of the rest of the room hanging upon the singer's actions. He parted his lips for the third verse; but at that moment another knock was audible upon the door. This time the knock was faint and hesitating.

The company seemed scared; the shepherd looked with consternation towards the entrance, and it was with some effort that he resisted his alarmed wife's deprecatory glance,

and uttered for the third time the welcoming words, "Walk in!"

The door was gently opened, and another man stood upon the mat. He, like those who had preceded him, was a stranger. This time it was a short, small personage, of fair complexion, and dressed in a decent suit of dark clothes.

"Can you tell me the way to ———?" he began: when gazing round the room to observe the nature of the company amongst whom he had fallen, his eyes lighted on the stranger in cinder-gray. It was just at the instant when the latter, who had thrown his mind into his song with such a will that he scarcely heeded the interruption, silenced all whispers and inquiries by bursting into his third verse:—

To-morrow is my working day,
Simple shepherds all—
To-morrow is a working day for me:
For the farmer's sheep is slain, and the lad who did it ta'en,
And on his soul may God ha' merc-y!

The stranger in the chimney-corner, waving cups with the singer so heartily that his mead splashed over on the hearth, repeated in his bass voice as before:—

And on his soul may God ha' merc-y!

All this time the third stranger had been standing in the doorway. Finding now that he did not come forward or go on speaking, the guests particularly regarded him. They noticed to their surprise that he stood before them the picture of abject terror—his knees trembling, his hand shaking so violently that the door-latch by which he supported himself rattled audibly: his white lips were parted, and his eyes fixed on the merry officer of justice in the middle of the room. A moment more and he had turned, closed the door, and fled.

"What a man can it be?" said the shepherd.

The rest, between the awfulness of their late discovery and the odd conduct of this third visitor, looked as if they knew not what to think, and said nothing. Instinctively they withdrew further and further from the grim gentleman in their midst, whom some of them seemed to take for the Prince of Darkness himself, till they formed a remote circle, an empty space of floor being left between them and him—

. . . circulus, cujus centrum diabolus.

The room was so silent—though there were more than twenty people in it—that nothing could be heard but the patter of the rain against the window-shutters, accompanied by the occasional hiss of a stray drop that fell down the chimney into the fire, and the steady puffing of the man in the corner, who had now resumed his pipe of long clay.

The stillness was unexpectedly broken. The distant sound of a gun reverberated through the air—apparently from the direction of the county-town.

"Be jiggered!" cried the stranger who had sung the song, jumping up.

"What does that mean?" asked several.

"A prisoner escaped from the jail—that's what it means."

All listened. The sound was repeated, and none of them spoke but

the man in the chimney-corner, who said quietly, "I've often been told that in this county they fire a gun at such times; but I never heard it till now."

"I wonder if it is *my* man?" murmured the personage in cinder-gray.

"Surely it is!" said the shepherd involuntarily. "And surely we've zeed him! That little man who looked in at the door by now, and quivered like a leaf when he zeed ye and heard your song!"

"His teeth chattered, and the breath went out of his body," said the dairyman.

"And his heart seemed to sink within him like a stone," said Oliver Giles.

"And he bolted as if he'd been shot at," said the hedge-carpenter.

"True—his teeth chattered, and his heart seemed to sink; and he bolted as if he'd been shot at," slowly summed up the man in the chimney-corner.

"I didn't notice it," remarked the hangman.

"We were all a-wondering what made him run off in such a fright," faltered one of the women against the wall, "and now 'tis explained!"

The firing of the alarm-gun went on at intervals, low and sullenly, and their suspicions became a certainty. The sinister gentleman in cinder-gray roused himself. "Is there a constable here?" he asked, in thick tones. "If so, let him step forward."

The engaged man of fifty stepped quavering out from the wall, his betrothed beginning to sob on the back of the chair.

"You are a sworn constable?"

"I be, sir."

"Then pursue the criminal at once, with assistance, and bring him back here. He can't have gone far."

"I will, sir, I will—when I've got my staff. I'll go home and get it, and come sharp here, and start in a body."

"Staff!—never mind your staff; the man'll be gone!"

"But I can't do nothing without my staff—can I, William, and John, and Charles Jake? No; for there's the king's royal crown a painted on en in yaller and gold, and the lion and the unicorn, so as when I raise en up and hit my prisoner, 'tis made a lawful blow thereby. I wouldn't 'tempt to take up a man without my staff—no, not I. If I hadn't the law to gie me courage, why, instead o' my taking up him he might take up me!"

"Now, I'm a king's man myself, and can give you authority enough for this," said the formidable officer in gray. "Now then, all of ye, be ready. Have ye any lanterns?"

"Yes—have ye any lanterns?—I demand it!" said the constable.

"And the rest of you able-bodied ——"

"Able-bodied men—yes—the rest of ye!" said the constable.

"Have you some good stout staves and pitchforks——"

"Staves and pitchforks—in the name o' the law! And take 'em in yer hands and go in quest, and do as we in authority tell ye!"

Thus aroused, the men prepared to give chase. The evidence was, indeed, though circumstantial, so convincing, that but little argument was

needed to show the shepherd's guests that after what they had seen it would look very much like connivance if they did not instantly pursue the unhappy third stranger, who could not as yet have gone more than a few hundred yards over such uneven country.

A shepherd is always well provided with lanterns; and, lighting these hastily, and with hurdle-staves in their hands, they poured out of the door, taking a direction along the crest of the hill, away from the town, the rain having fortunately a little abated.

Disturbed by the noise, or possibly by unpleasant dreams of her baptism, the child who had been christened began to cry heart-brokenly in the room overhead. These notes of grief came down through the chinks of the floor to the ears of the women below, who jumped up one by one, and seemed glad of the excuse to ascend and comfort the baby, for the incidents of the last half-hour greatly oppressed them. Thus in the space of two or three minutes the room on the ground-floor was deserted quite.

But it was not for long. Hardly had the sound of footsteps died away when a man returned round the corner of the house from the direction the pursuers had taken. Peeping in at the door, and seeing nobody there, he entered leisurely. It was the stranger of the chimney-corner, who had gone out with the rest. The motive of his return was shown by his helping himself to a cut piece of skimmer-cake that lay on a ledge beside where he had sat, and which he had apparently forgotten to take with him. He also poured out half a cup more mead from the quantity that remained, ravenously eating and drinking these as he stood. He had not finished when another figure came in just as quietly—his friend in cinder-gray.

"O—you here?" said the latter, smiling. "I thought you had gone to help in the capture." And this speaker also revealed the object of his return by looking solicitously round for the fascinating mug of old mead.

"And I thought you had gone," said the other, continuing his skimmer-cake with some effort.

"Well, on second thoughts, I felt there were enough without me," said the first confidentially, "and such a night as it is, too. Besides, 'tis the business o' the Government to take care of its criminals—not mine."

"True; so it is. And I felt as you did, that there were enough without me."

"I don't want to break my limbs running over the humps and hollows of this wild country."

"Nor I neither, between you and me."

"These shepherd-people are used to it—simple-minded souls, you know, stirred up to anything in a moment. They'll have him ready for me before the morning and no trouble to me at all."

"They'll have him, and we shall have saved ourselves all labor in the matter."

"True, true. Well my way is to Casterbridge; and 'tis as much as my legs will do to take me that far. Going the same way?"

"No, I am sorry to say! I have to get home over there" (he nodded indefinitely to the right), "and I feel as you do, that it is quite enough for my legs to do before bedtime."

The other had by this time finished the mead in the mug, after which, shaking hands heartily at the door, and wishing each other well, they went their several ways.

In the meantime the company of pursuers had reached the end of the hog's-back elevation which dominated this part of the down. They had decided on no particular plan of action; and, finding that the man of the baleful trade was no longer in their company, they seemed quite unable to form any such plan now. They descended in all directions down the hill, and straightway several of the party fell into the snare set by Nature for all misguided midnight ramblers over this part of the cretaceous formation. The "lanchets," or flint slopes, which belted the escarpment at intervals of a dozen yards, took the less cautious ones unawares, and losing their footing on the rubbly steep they slid sharply downwards, the lanterns rolling from their hands to the bottom, and there lying on their sides till the horn was scorched through.

When they had again gathered themselves together, the shepherd, as the man who knew the country best, took the lead, and guided them round these treacherous inclines. The lanterns, which seemed rather to dazzle their eyes and warn the fugitive than to assist them in the exploration, were extinguished, due silence was observed; and in this more rational order they plunged into the vale. It was a grassy, briery, moist defile, affording some shelter to any person who had sought it; but the party perambulated it in vain, and ascended on the other side. Here they wandered apart, and after an interval closed together again to report progress. At the second time of closing in they found themselves near a lonely ash, the single tree on this part of the coomb, probably sown there by a passing bird some fifty years before. And here, standing a little to one side of the trunk, as motionless as the trunk itself, appeared the man they were in quest of, his outline being well defined against the sky beyond. The band noiselessly drew up and faced him.

"Your money or your life!" said the constable sternly to the still figure.

"No, no," whispered John Pitcher. "'Tisn't our side ought to say that. That's the doctrine of vagabonds like him, and we be on the side of the law."

"Well, well," replied the constable impatiently; "I must say something, mustn't I? and if you had all the weight o' this undertaking upon your mind, perhaps you'd say the wrong thing too!—Prisoner at the bar, surrender, in the name of the Father—the Crown, I mane!"

The man under the tree seemed now to notice them for the first time, and, giving them no opportunity whatever for exhibiting their courage, he strolled slowly towards them. He was, indeed, the little man, the third stranger; but his trepidation had in a great measure gone.

"Well, travellers," he said, "did I hear ye speak to me?"

"You did: you've got to come and be our prisoner at once!" said the constable. "We arrest 'ee on the charge of not biding in Casterbridge jail in a decent proper manner to be hung to-morrow morning. Neighbours, do your duty, and seize the culpet!"

On hearing the charge, the man seemed enlightened, and, saying not another word, resigned himself with preternatural civility to the search-party, who, with their staves in their hands, surrounded him on all sides, and marched him back towards the shepherd's cottage.

It was eleven o'clock by the time they arrived. The light shining from the open door, a sound of men's voices within, proclaimed to them as they approached the house that some new events had arisen in their absence. On entering they discovered the shepherd's living room to be invaded by two officers from Casterbridge jail, and a well-known magistrate who lived at the nearest country-seat, intelligence of the escape having become generally circulated.

"Gentlemen," said the constable, "I have brought back your man—not without risk and danger; but every one must do his duty! He is inside this circle of able-bodied persons, who have lent me useful aid, considering their ignorance of Crown work. Men, bring forward your prisoner!" And the third stranger was led to the light.

"Who is this?" said one of the officials.

"The man," said the constable.

"Certainly not," said the turnkey; and the first corroborated his statement.

"But how can it be otherwise?" asked the constable. "Or why was he so terrified at sight o' the singing instrument of the law who sat there?" Here he related the strange behaviour of the third stranger on entering the house during the hangman's song.

"Can't understand it," said the officer coolly. "All I know is that it is not the condemned man. He's quite a different character from this one; a gauntish fellow, with dark hair and eyes, rather good-looking, and with a musical bass voice that if you heard it once you'd never mistake as long as you lived."

"Why, souls—'twas the man in the chimney-corner!"

"Hey—what?" said the magistrate, coming forward after inquiring particulars from the shepherd in the background. "Haven't you got the man after all?"

"Well, sir," said the constable, "he's the man we were in search of, that's true; and yet he's not the man we were in search of. For the man we were in search of was not the man we wanted, sir, if you understand my every-day way; for 'twas the man in the chimney-corner!"

"A pretty kettle of fish altogether!" said the magistrate. "You had better start for the other man at once."

The prisoner now spoke for the first time. The mention of the man in the chimney-corner seemed to have moved him as nothing else could do. "Sir," he said, stepping forward to the magistrate, "take no

more trouble about me. The time is come when I may as well speak. I have done nothing; my crime is that the condemned man is my brother. Early this afternoon I left home at Shottsford to tramp it all the way to Casterbridge jail to bid him farewell. I was benighted, and called here to rest and ask the way. When I opened the door I saw before me the very man, my brother, that I thought to see in the condemned cell at Casterbridge. He was in this chimney-corner; and jammed close to him, so that he could not have got out if he had tried, was the executioner who'd come to take his life, singing a song about it and not knowing that it was his victim who was close by, joining in to save appearances. My brother looked a glance of agony at me, and I knew he meant, 'Don't reveal what you see; my life depends on it.' I was so terror-struck that I could hardly stand, and, not knowing what I did, I turned and hurried away."

The narrator's manner and tone had the stamp of truth, and his story made a great impression on all around. "And do you know where your brother is at the present time?" asked the magistrate.

"I do not. I have never seen him since I closed this door."

"I can testify to that, for we've been between ye ever since," said the constable.

"Where does he think to fly to?—what is his occupation?"

"He's a watch-and-clock-maker, sir."

"'A said 'a was a wheelwright—a wicked rogue," said the constable.

"The wheels of clocks and watches he meant, no doubt," said Shepherd Fennel. "I thought his hands were palish for's trade."

"Well, it appears to me that nothing can be gained by retaining this poor man in custody," said the magistrate; "your business lies with the other, unquestionably."

And so the little man was released off-hand; but he looked nothing the less sad on that account, it being beyond the power of magistrate or constable to raze out the written troubles in his brain, for they concerned another whom he regarded with more solicitude than himself. When this was done, and the man had gone his way, the night was found to be so far advanced that it was deemed useless to renew the search before the next morning.

Next day, accordingly, the quest for the clever sheepstealer became general and keen, to all appearances at least. But the intended punishment was cruelly disproportioned to the transgression, and the sympathy of a great many country-folk in that district was strongly on the side of the fugitive. Moreover, his marvellous coolness and daring in hob-and-nobbing with the hangman, under the unprecedented circumstances of the shepherd's party, won their admiration. So that it may be questioned if all those who ostensibly made themselves so busy in exploring woods and fields and lanes were quite so thorough when it came to the private examination of their own lofts and outhouses. Stories were afloat of a mysterious figure being occasionally seen in some old overgrown trackway

or other, remote from turnpike roads; but when a search was instituted in any of these suspected quarters nobody was found. Thus the days and weeks passed without tidings.

In brief, the bass-voiced man of the chimney-corner was never recaptured. Some said that he went across the sea, others that he did not, but buried himself in the depths of a populous city. At any rate, the gentleman in cinder-gray never did his morning's work at Casterbridge, nor met anywhere at all, for business purposes, the genial comrade with whom he had passed an hour of relaxation in the lonely house on the coomb.

The grass has long been green on the graves of Shepherd Fennel and his frugal wife; the guests who made up the christening party have mainly followed their entertainers to the tomb; the baby in whose honour they all had met is a matron in the sere and yellow leaf. But the arrival of the three strangers at the shepherd's that night, and the details connected therewith, is a story as well known as ever in the country about Higher Crowstairs.

THE HEART OF LITTLE SHIKARA

EDISON MARSHALL

If it hadn't been for a purple moon that came peering up above the dark jungle just at nightfall, it would have been impossible to tell that Little Shikara was at his watch. He was really just the color of the shadows—a rather pleasant brown—he was very little indeed, and besides, he was standing very, very still. If he was trembling at all, from anticipation and excitement, it was no more than Nahar the tiger trembles as he crouches in ambush. But the moon did show him—peering down through the leaf-clusters of the heavy vines—and shone very softly in his wide-open dark eyes.

And it was a purple moon—no other color that man could name. It looked almost unreal, like a paper moon painted very badly by a clumsy stage-hand. The jungle-moon quite often has that peculiar purplish tint, most travellers know, but few of them indeed ever try to tell what causes it. This particular moon probed down here and there between the tall bamboos, transformed the jungle—just now waking—into a mystery and a fairyland, glinted on a hard-packed elephant trail that wound away into the thickets, and always came back to shine on the coal-black Oriental eyes of the little boy beside the village gate. It showed him standing very straight and just as tall as his small stature would permit, and looked oddly silvery and strange on his long, dark hair. Little Shikara, son of Khoda Dunnoo, was waiting for the return of a certain idol and demigod who was even now riding home in his *howdah* from the tiger hunt.

Other of the villagers would be down to meet Warwick Sahib as soon as they heard the shouts of his beaters—but Little Shikara had been

waiting almost an hour. Likely, if they had known about it, they would have commented on his badness, because he was notoriously bad, if indeed—as the villagers told each other—he was not actually cursed with evil spirits.

In the first place, he was almost valueless as a herder of buffalo. Three times, when he had been sent with the other boys to watch the herds in their wallows, he had left his post and crept away into the fringe of jungle on what was unquestionably some mission of witchcraft. For small naked brown boys, as a rule, do not go alone and unarmed into the thick bamboos. Too many things can happen to prevent them ever coming out again; too many brown silent ribbons crawl in the grass, or too many yellow, striped creatures, no less lithe, lurk in the thickets. But the strangest thing of all—and the surest sign of witchcraft—was that he had always come safely out again, yet with never any satisfactory explanations as to why he had gone. He had always looked some way very joyful and tremulous—and perhaps even pale if from the nature of things a brown boy ever can look pale. But it was the kind of paleness that one has after a particularly exquisite experience. It was not the dumb, teeth-chattering paleness of fear.

"I saw the sergeant of the jungle," Little Shikara said after one of these excursions. And this made no sense at all.

"There are none of the King's soldiers here," the brown village folk replied to him. "Either thou liest to us, or thine eyes lied to thee. And didst thou also see the chevron that told his rank?"

"That was the way I knew him. It was the black bear, and he wore the pale chevron low on his throat."

This was Little Shikara all over. Of course he referred to the black Himalayan bear which all men know wears a yellowish patch, of chevron shape, just in front of his fore legs; but why he should call him a jungle-sergeant was quite beyond the wit of the village folk to say. Their imagination did not run in that direction. It never even occurred to them that Little Shikara might be a born jungle creature, expatriated by the accident of birth—one of that free, strange breed that can never find peace in the villages of men.

"But remember the name we gave him," his mother would say. "Perhaps he is only living up to his name."

For there are certain native hunters in India that are known, far and wide, as the Shikaris; and possibly she meant in her tolerance that her little son was merely a born huntsman. But in reality Little Shikara was not named for these men at all. Rather it was for a certain fleet-winged little hawk, a hunter of sparrows, that is one of the most free spirits in all the jungle.

And it was almost like taking part in some great hunt himself—to be waiting at the gate for the return of Warwick Sahib. Even now, the elephant came striding out of the shadows; and Little Shikara could see the trophy. The hunt had indeed been successful, and the boy's glowing eyes beheld—even in the shadows—the largest, most beautiful

tiger-skin he had ever seen. It was the great Nahar, the royal tiger, who had killed one hundred cattle from near-by fields.

Warwick Sahib rode in his *howdah*, and he did not seem to see the village people that came out to meet him. In truth, he seemed half asleep, his muscles limp, his gray eyes full of thoughts. He made no answer to the triumphant shouts of the village folk. Little Shikara glanced once at the lean, bronzed face, the limp, white, thin hands, and something like a shiver of ecstasy went clear to his ten toes. For like many other small boys, all over the broad world, he was a hero-worshipper to the last hair of his head; and this quiet man on the elephant was to him beyond all measure the most wonderful living creature on the earth.

He didn't cry out, as the others did. He simply stood in mute worship, his little body tingling with glory. Warwick Sahib had looked up now, and his slow eyes were sweeping the line of brown faces. But still he did not seem to see them. And then—wonder of wonders—his eyes rested full on the eyes of his little worshipper beside the gate.

But it was quite the way of Warwick Sahib to sweep his gray, tired-out eyes over a scene and seemingly perceive nothing; yet in reality absorbing every detail with the accuracy of a photographic plate. And his seeming indifference was not a pose with him, either. He was just a great sportsman who was also an English gentleman, and he had learned certain lessons of impassiveness from the wild. Only one of the brown faces he beheld was worth a lingering glance. And when he met that one his eyes halted in their sweeping survey—and Warwick Sahib smiled.

That face was the brown, eager visage of Little Shikara. And the blood of the boy flowed to the skin, and he glowed red all over through the brown.

It was only the faintest of quiet, tolerant smiles; but it meant more to him than almost any kind of an honor could have meant to the prematurely gray man in the *howdah*. The latter passed on to his estate, and some of the villagers went back to their women and their thatch huts. But still Little Shikara stood motionless—and it wasn't until the thought suddenly came to him that possibly the beaters had already gathered and were telling the story of the kill that with startling suddenness he raced back through the gates to the village.

Yes, the beaters had assembled in a circle under a tree, and most of the villagers had gathered to hear the story. He slipped in among them, and listened with both outstanding little ears. Warwick Sahib had dismounted from his elephant as usual, the beaters said, and with but one attendant had advanced up the bed of a dry creek. This was quite like Warwick Sahib, and Little Shikara felt himself tingling again. Other hunters, particularly many of the rich sahibs from across the sea, shot their tigers from the security of the *howdah;* but this wasn't Warwick's way of doing. The male tiger had risen snarling from his lair, and had been felled at the first shot.

Most of the villagers had supposed that the story would end at this point. Warwick Sahib's tiger hunts were usually just such simple and expeditious affairs. The gun would lift to his shoulder, the quiet eyes would glance along the barrel—and the tiger, whether charging or standing still—would speedily die. But to-day there had been a curious epilogue. Just as the beaters had started toward the fallen animal, and the white Heaven-born's cigarette-case was open in his hand, Nahara, Nahar's great, tawny mate, had suddenly sprung forth from the bamboo thickets.

She drove straight to the nearest of the beaters. There was no time whatever for Warwick to take aim. His rifle leaped, like a live thing, in his arms, but not one of the horrified beaters had seen his eyes lower to the sights. Yet the bullet went home—they could tell by the way the tiger flashed to her breast in the grass.

Yet she was only wounded. One of the beaters, starting, had permitted a bough of a tree to whip Warwick in the face, and the blow had disturbed what little aim he had. It was almost a miracle that he had hit the great cat at all. At once the thickets had closed around her, and the beaters had been unable to drive her forth again.

The circle was silent thereafter. They seemed to be waiting for Khusru, one of the head men of the village to give his opinion. He knew more about the wild animals than any mature native in the assembly, and his comments on the hunting stories were usually worth hearing.

"We will not be in the honored service of the Protector of the Poor at this time a year from now," he said.

They all waited tensely. Shikara shivered. "Speak, Khusru," they urged him.

"Warwick Sahib will go again to the jungles—and Nahara will be waiting. She owes two debts. One is the killing of her mate—and ye know that these two tigers have been long and faithful mates. Do ye think she will let that debt go unpaid? She will also avenge her own wound."

"Perhaps she will die of bleeding," one of the others suggested.

"Nay, or ye would have found her this afternoon. Ye know that it is the wounded tiger that is most to be feared. One day, and he will go forth in pursuit of her again; and then ye will not see him riding back so grandly on his elephant. Perhaps she will come here, to carry away *our* children."

Again Shikara tingled—hoping that Nahara would at least come close enough to cause excitement. And that night, too happy to keep silent, he told his mother of Warwick Sahib's smile. "And some time I—I, thine own son," he said as sleepiness came upon him, "will be a killer of tigers, even as Warwick Sahib."

"Little sparrow-hawk," his mother laughed at him. "Little one of mighty words, only the great sahibs that come from afar, and Warwick Sahib himself, may hunt the tiger. So how canst thou, little worthless?"

"I will soon be grown," he persisted, "and I—I, too—will some time return with such a tiger-skin as

the great Heaven-born brought this afternoon." Little Shikara was very sleepy, and he was telling his dreams much more frankly than was his wont. "And the village folk will come out to meet me with shoutings, and I will tell them of the shot—in the circle under the tree."

"And where, little hawk, wilt thou procure thine elephants, and such rupees as are needed?"

"Warwick Sahib shoots from the ground—and so will I. And sometimes he goes forth with only one attendant—and I will not need even one. And who can say—perhaps he will find me even a bolder man than Gunga Singhai; and he will take me in his place on the hunts in the jungles."

For Gunga Singhai was Warwick Sahib's own personal attendant and gun-carrier—the native that the Protector of the Poor could trust in the tightest places. So it was only to be expected that Little Shikara's mother should laugh at him. The idea of her son being an attendant of Warwick Sahib, not to mention a hunter of tigers, was only a tale to tell her husband when the boy's bright eyes were closed in sleep.

"Nay, little man," she told him. "Would I want thee torn to pieces in Nahara's claws? Would I want thee smelling of the jungle again, as thou didst after chasing the waterbuck through the bamboos? Nay—thou wilt be a herdsman, like thy father—and perhaps gather many rupees."

But Little Shikara did not want to think of rupees. Even now, as sleep came to him, his childish spirit had left the circle of thatch roofs, and had gone on tremulous expeditions into the jungle. Far away, the trumpet-call of a wild tusker trembled through the moist, hot night; and great bell-shaped flowers made the air pungent and heavy with perfume. A tigress skulked somewhere in a thicket licking an injured leg with her rough tongue, pausing to listen to every sound the night gave forth. Little Shikara whispered in his sleep.

A half mile distant, in his richly furnished bungalow, Warwick Sahib dozed over his after-dinner cigar. He was in evening clothes, and crystal and silver glittered on his board. But his gray eyes were half closed; and the gleam from his plate could not pass the long, dark lashes. For his spirit was far distant, too—on the jungle trails with that of Little Shikara.

II

One sunlit morning, perhaps a month after the skin of Nahar was brought in from the jungle, Warwick Sahib's mail was late. It was an unheard-of thing. Always before, just as the clock struck eight, he would hear the cheerful tinkle of the postman's bells. At first he considered complaining; but as morning drew to early afternoon he began to believe that investigation would be the wiser course.

The postman's route carried him along an old elephant trail through a patch of thick jungle beside one of the tributaries of the Manipur. When natives went out to look, he was neither on the path nor drowned in the creek, nor yet in his thatched hut at the other end of his route. The truth was that this particular

postman's bells would never be heard by human ears again. And there was enough evidence in the wet mould of the trail to know what had occurred.

That night the circle under the tree was silent and shivering. "Who is next?" they asked of one another. The jungle night came down, breathless and mysterious, and now and then a twig was cracked by a heavy foot at the edge of the thickets. In Warwick's house, the great Protector of the Poor took his rifles from their cases and fitted them together.

"To-morrow," he told Gunga Singhai, "we will settle for that postman's death." Singhai breathed deeply, but said nothing. Perhaps his dark eyes brightened. The tiger-hunts were nearly as great a delight to him as they were to Warwick himself.

But while Nahara, lame from Warwick's bullet, could no longer overtake cattle, she did with great skilfulness avoid the onrush of the beaters. Again Little Shikara waited at the village gate for his hero to return; but the beaters walked silently to-night. Nor were there any tales to be told under the tree.

Nahara, a fairly respectable cattle-killer before, had become in a single night one of the worst terrors of India. Of course she was still a coward, but she had learned, by virtue of a chance meeting with a postman on a trail after a week of heart-devouring starvation, two or three extremely portentous lessons. One of them was that not even the little deer, drinking beside the Manipur, died half so easily as these tall, forked forms of which she had previously been so afraid. She found out also that they could neither run swiftly nor walk silently, and they could be approached easily even by a tiger that cracked a twig with every step. It simplified the problem of living immensely; and just as any other feline would have done, she took the line of least resistance. If there had been plenty of carrion in the jungle, Nahara might never have hunted men. But the kites and the jackals looked after the carrion; and they were much swifter and keener-eyed than a lame tiger.

She knew enough not to confine herself to one village; and it is rather hard to explain how any lower creature, that obviously cannot reason, could have possessed this knowledge. Perhaps it was because she had learned that a determined hunt, with many beaters and men on elephants, invariably followed her killings. It was always well to travel just as far as possible from the scene. She found out also that, just as a doe is easier felled than a horned buck, certain of this new kind of game were more easily taken than the others. Sometimes children played at the door of their huts, and sometimes old men were afflicted with such maladies that they could not flee at all. All these things Nahara learned; and in learning them she caused a certain civil office of the British Empire to put an exceedingly large price on her head.

Gradually the fact dawned on her that unlike the deer and the buffalo, this new game was more easily hunted in the daylight—particularly in that tired-out, careless twilight hour when the herders and the plantation hands

came in from their work. At night the village folk kept in their huts, and such wood-cutters and gipsies as slept without wakened every hour to tend their fires. Nahara was deathly afraid of fire. Night after night she would creep round and round a gipsy camp, her eyes like two pale blue moons in the darkness, and would never dare attack.

And because she was taking her living in a manner forbidden by the laws of the jungle, the glory and beauty of her youth quickly departed from her. There are no prisons for those that break the jungle laws, no courts and no appointed officers; but because these are laws that go down to the roots of life, punishment is always swift and inevitable. "Thou shalt not kill men," is the first law of the wild creatures; and everyone knows that any animal or breed of animals that breaks this law has sooner or later been hunted down and slain—just like any other murderer. The mange came upon her, and she lost flesh, and certain of her teeth began to come out. She was no longer the beautiful female of her species, to be sung to by the weaver-birds as she passed beneath. She was a hag and a vampire, hatred of whom lay deep in every human heart in her hunting range.

Often the hunting was poor, and sometimes she went many days in a stretch without making a single kill. And in all beasts, high and low, this is the last step to the worst degeneracy of all. It instils a curious, terrible kind of blood-lust—to kill, not once, but as many times as possible in the same hunt; to be content not with one death, but to slay and slay until the whole herd is destroyed. It is the instinct that makes a little weasel kill all the chickens in a coop, when one was all it could possibly carry away, and that will cause a wolf to leap from sheep to sheep in a fold until every one is dead. Nahara didn't get a chance to kill every day; so when the opportunity did come, like a certain pitiable kind of human hunter who comes from afar to hunt small game, she killed as many times as she could in quick succession. And the British Empire raised the price on her head.

One afternoon found her within a half mile of Warwick's bungalow, and for five days she had gone without food. One would not have thought of her as a royal tigress, the queen of the felines and one of the most beautiful of all living things. And since she was still tawny and graceful, it would be hard to understand why she no longer gave the impression of beauty. It was simply gone, as a flame goes, and her queenliness was wholly departed, too. In some vague way she had become a poisonous, a ghastly thing, to be named with such outcasts as the jackals or hyenas.

Excessive hunger, in most of the flesh-eating animals, is really a first cousin to madness. It brings bad dreams and visions, and, worst of all, it induces an insubordination to all the forest laws of man and beast. A well-fed wolf-pack will run in stark panic from a human being; but even the wisest of mountaineers do not care to meet the same gray band in the starving times of winter. Starvation brings recklessness, a desperate frenzied courage that is likely to upset

all of one's preconceived notions as to the behaviour of animals. It also brings, so that all men may be aware of its presence, a peculiar lurid glow to the balls of the eyes.

In fact, the two pale circles of fire were the most noticeable characteristics of the long, tawny cat that crept through the bamboos. Except for them, she would hardly have been discernible at all. The yellow grass made a perfect background, her black stripes looked like the streaks of shadow between the stalks of bamboo, and for one that is lame she crept with an astounding silence. One couldn't have believed that such a great creature could lie so close to the earth and be so utterly invisible in the low thickets.

A little peninsula of dwarf bamboos and tall jungle grass extended out into the pasture before the village and Nahara crept out clear to its point. She didn't seem to be moving. One couldn't catch the stir and draw of muscles. And yet she slowly glided to the end; then began her wait. Her head sunk low, her body grew tense, her tail whipped softly back and forth, with as easy a motion as the swaying of a serpent. The light flamed and died and flamed and died again in her pale eyes.

Soon a villager who had been working in Warwick's fields came trotting in Oriental fashion across the meadow. His eyes were only human, and he did not see the tawny shape in the tall grass. If any one had told him that a full-grown tigress could have crept to such a place and still remained invisible, he would have laughed. He was going to his thatched hut, to brown wife and babies, and it was no wonder that he trotted swiftly. The muscles of the great cat bunched, and now the whipping tail began to have a little vertical motion that is the final warning of a spring.

The man was already in leaping range; but the tiger had learned, in many experiences, always to make sure. Still she crouched—a single instant in which the trotting native came two paces nearer. Then the man drew up with a gasp of fright.

For just as the clear outlines of an object that has long been concealed in a maze of light and shadow will often leap, with sudden vividness, to the eyes, the native suddenly perceived the tiger.

He caught the whole dread picture—the crouching form, the terrible blue lights of the eyes, the whipping tail. The gasp he uttered from his closing throat seemed to act like the fall of a firing-pin against a shell on the bunched muscles of the animal; and she left her covert in a streak of tawny light.

But Nahara's leaps had never been quite accuracte since she had been wounded by Warwick's bullet, months before. They were usually straight enough for the general purposes of hunting, but they missed by a long way the "theoretical centre of impact" of which artillery officers speak. Her lame paw always seemed to disturb her balance. By remembering it, she could usually partly overcome the disadvantage; but to-day, in the madness of her hunger, she had been unable to remember anything except the terrible rapture of killing. This circumstance alone, however, would

not have saved the native's life. Even though her fangs missed his throat, the power of the blow and her rending talons would have certainly snatched away his life as a storm snatches a leaf. But there was one other determining factor. The Burman had seen the tiger just before she leaped; and although there had been no time for conscious thought, his guardian reflexes had flung him to one side in a single frenzied effort to miss the full force of the spring.

The result of both these things was that he received only an awkward, sprawling blow from the animal's shoulder. Of course he was hurled to the ground; for no human body in the world is built to withstand the ton or so of shocking power of a three-hundred-pound cat leaping through the air. The tigress sprawled down also, and because she lighted on her wounded paw, she squealed with pain. It was possibly three seconds before she had forgotten the stabbing pain in her paw and had gathered herself to spring on the unconscious form of the native. And that three seconds gave Warwick Sahib, sitting at the window of his study, an opportunity to seize his rifle and fire.

Warwick knew tigers, and he had kept the rifle always ready for just such a need as this. The distance was nearly five hundred yards, and the bullet went wide of its mark. Nevertheless, it saved the native's life. The great cat remembered this same far-off explosion from another day, in a dry creek-bed of months before, and the sing of the bullet was a remembered thing, too. Although it would speedily return to her, her courage fled and she turned and faced into the bamboos.

In an instant, Warwick was on his great veranda, calling his beaters. Gunga Singhai, his faithful gun-carrier, slipped shells into the magazine of his master's high-calibered close-range tiger-rifle. "The elephant, Sahib?" he asked swiftly.

"Nay, this will be on foot. Make the beaters circle about the fringe of bamboos. Thou and I will cross the eastern fields and shoot at her as she breaks through."

But there was really no time to plan a complete campaign. Even now, the first gray of twilight was blurring the sharp outlines of the jungle, and the soft jungle night was hovering, ready to descend. Warwick's plan was to cut through to a certain little creek that flowed into the river and with Singhai to continue on to the edge of the bamboos that overlooked a wide field. The beaters would prevent the tigress from turning back beyond the village, and it was at least possible that he would get a shot at her as she burst from the jungle and crossed the field to the heavier thickets beyond.

"Warwick Sahib walks into the teeth of his enemy," Khusru, the hunter, told a little group that watched from the village gate. "Nahara will collect her debts."

A little brown boy shivered at his words and wondered if the beaters would turn and kick him, as they had always done before, if he should attempt to follow them. It was the tiger-hunt, in view of his own village, and he sat down, tremulous with rapture, in the grass to watch. It was

almost as if his dream—that he himself should be a hunter of tigers—was coming true. He wondered why the beaters seemed to move so slowly and with so little heart.

He would have known it if he could have looked into their eyes. Each black pupil was framed with white. Human hearts grow shaken and bloodless from such sights as this they had just seen, and only the heart of a jungle creature—the heart of the eagle that the jungle gods, by some unheard-of fortune, had put in the breast of Little Shikara—could prevail against them. Besides, the superstitious Burmans thought that Warwick was walking straight to death—that the time had come for Nahara to collect her debts.

III

Warwick Sahib and Singhai disappeared at once into the fringe of jungle, and silence immediately fell upon them. The cries of the beaters at once seemed curiously dim. It was as if no sound could live in the great silences under the arching trees. Soon it was as if they were alone.

They walked side by side, Warwick with his rifle held ready. He had no false ideas in regard to this tiger-hunt. He knew that his prey was desperate with hunger, that she had many old debts to pay, and that she would charge on sight.

The self-rage that is felt on missing some particularly fortunate chance is not confined to human beings alone. There is an old saying in the forest that a feline that has missed his stroke is like a jackal in dog-days—and that means that it is not safe to be anywhere in the region with him. He simply goes rabid and is quite likely to leap at the first living thing that stirs. Warwick knew that Nahara had just been cheated out of her kill and someone in the jungle would pay for it.

The gaudy birds that looked down from the tree-branches could scarcely recognize this prematurely gray man as a hunter. He walked rather quietly, yet with no conscious effort toward stealth. The rifle rested easily in his arms, his gray eyes were quiet and thoughtful as always. Singularly, his splendid features were quite in repose. The Burman, however, had more of the outer signs of alertness; and yet there was none of the blind terror upon him that marked the beaters.

"Where are the men?" Warwick asked quietly. "It is strange that we do not hear them shouting."

"They are afraid, Sahib," Singhai replied. "The forest pigs have left us to do our own hunting."

Warwick corrected him with a smile. "Forest pigs are brave enough," he answered. "They are sheep—just sheep—sheep of the plains."

The broad trail divided, like a three-tined candlestick, into narrow trails. Warwick halted beside the centre of the three that led to the creek they were obliged to cross. Just for an instant he stood watching, gazing into the deep-blue dusk of the deeper jungle. Twilight was falling softly. The trails soon vanished into shadow—patches of deep gloom, relieved here and there by a bright leaf that reflected the last

twilight rays. A living creature coughed and rustled away in the thickets beside him.

"There is little use of going on," he said. "It is growing too dark. But there will be killings before the dawn if we don't get her first."

The servant stood still, waiting. It was not his place to advise his master.

"If we leave her, she'll come again before the dawn. Many of the herders haven't returned—she'll get one of them sure. At least we may cross the creek and get a view of the great fields. She is certain to cross them if she has heard the beaters."

In utter silence they went on. One hundred yards farther they came to the creek, and both strode in together to ford.

The water was only knee-deep, but Warwick's boots sank three inches in the mud of the bottom. And at that instant the gods of the jungle, always waiting with drawn scimitar for the unsuspecting, turned against them.

Singhai suddenly splashed down into the water, on his hands and knees. He did not cry out. If he made any sound at all, it was just a shivering gasp that the splash of water wholly obscured. But the thing that brought home the truth to Warwick was the pain that flashed, vivid as lightning, across his dark face; and the horror of death that left its shadow. Something churned and writhed in the mud; and then Warwick fired.

Both of them had forgotten Mugger, the crocodile, that so loves to wait in the mud of a ford. He had seized Singhai's foot, and had already snatched him down into the water when Warwick fired. No living flesh can withstand the terrible, rending shock of a high-powered sporting rifle at close range. Mugger had plates of armor, but even these could not have availed against it if he had been exposed to the fire. As it was, several inches of water stood between, a more effective armor than a two-inch steel plate on a battleship. Of course the shock carried through, a smashing blow that caused the reptile to release his hold on Singhai's leg; but before the native could get to his feet he had struck again. The next instant both men were fighting for their lives.

They fought with their hands, and Warwick fought with his rifle, and the native slashed again and again with the long knife that he carried at his belt. To a casual glance, a crocodile is wholly incapable of quick action. These two found him a slashing, darting, wolf-like thing, lunging with astounding speed through the muddied water, knocking them from their feet and striking at them as they fell.

The reptile was only half grown, but in the water they had none of the usual advantages that man has over the beasts with which he does battle. Warwick could not find a target for his rifle. But even human bodies, usually so weak, find themselves possessed of an amazing reserve strength and agility in the moment of need. These men realized perfectly that their lives were the stakes for which they fought, and they gave every ounce of strength

and energy they had. Their aim was to hold the mugger off until they could reach the shore.

At last, by a lucky stroke, Singhai's knife blinded one of the lurid reptile eyes. He was prone in the water when he administered it, and it went home just as the savage teeth were snapping at his throat. For an instant the great reptile flopped in an impotent half-circle, partly reared out of the water. It gave Warwick a chance to shoot, a single instant in which the rifle seemed to whirl about in his arms, drive to his shoulder, and blaze in the deepening twilight. And the shot went true. It pierced the mugger from beneath, tearing upward through the brain. And then the agitated waters of the ford slowly grew quiet.

The last echo of the report was dying when Singhai stretched his bleeding arms about Warwick's body, caught up the rifle and dragged them forty feet up on the shore. It was an effort that cost the last of his strength. And as the stars popped out of the sky, one by one, through the gray of dusk, the two men lay silent, side by side, on the grassy bank.

Warwick was the first to regain consciousness. At first he didn't understand the lashing pain in his wrists, the strange numbness in one of his legs, the darkness with the great white Indian stars shining through. Then he remembered. And he tried to stretch his arm to the prone form beside him.

The attempt was an absolute failure. The cool brain dispatched the message, it flew along the telegraph-wires of the nerves, but the muscles refused to react. He remembered that the teeth of the mugger had met in one of the muscles of his upper arm, but before unconsciousness had come upon him he had been able to lift the gun to shoot. Possibly infection from the bite had in some manner temporarily paralyzed the arm. He turned, wracked with pain, on his side and lifted his left arm. In doing so his hand crossed before his eyes—and then he smiled wanly in the darkness.

It was quite like Warwick, sportsman and English gentleman, to smile at a time like this. Even in the gray darkness of the jungle night he could see the hand quite plainly. It no longer looked slim and white. And he remembered that the mugger had caught his fingers in one of its last rushes.

He paused only for one glance at the mutilated member. He knew that his first work was to see how Singhai had fared. In that glance he was boundlessly relieved to see that the hand could unquestionably be saved. The fingers were torn, yet their bones did not seem to be severed. Temporarily at least, however, the hand was utterly useless. The fingers felt strange and detached.

He reached out to the still form beside him, touching the dark skin first with his fingers, and then, because they had ceased to function, with the flesh of his wrist. He expected to find it cold. Singhai was alive, however, and his warm blood beat close to the dark skin.

But he was deeply unconscious, and it was possible that one foot was hopelessly mutilated.

For a moment Warwick lay quite still, looking his situation squarely in the face. He did not believe that either he or his attendant was mortally or even very seriously hurt. True, one of his arms had suffered paralysis, but there was no reason for thinking it had been permanently injured. His hand would be badly scarred, but soon as good as ever. The real question that faced them was that of getting back to the bungalow.

Walking was out of the question. His whole body was bruised and lacerated, and he was already dangerously weak from loss of blood. It would take all his energy, these first few hours, to keep his consciousness. Besides, it was perfectly obvious that Singhai could not walk. And English gentlemen do not desert their servants at a time like this. The real mystery lay in the fact that the beaters had not already found and rescued them.

He wore a watch with luminous dial on his left wrist, and he managed to get it before his eyes. And then understanding came to him. A full hour had passed since he and his servant had fought the mugger in the ford. And the utter silence of early night had come down over the jungle.

There was only one thing to believe. The beaters had evidently heard him shoot, sought in vain for him in the thickets, possibly passed within a few hundred feet of him, and because he had been unconscious he had not heard them or called to them, and now they had given him up for lost. He remembered with bitterness how all of them had been sure that an encounter with Nahara would cost him his life, and would thus be all the more quick to believe he had died in her talons. Nahara had her mate and her own lameness to avenge, they had said, attributing in their superstition human emotions to the brute natures of animals. It would have been quite useless for Warwick to attempt to tell them that the male tiger, in the mind of his wicked mate, was no longer even a memory, and that premeditated vengeance is an emotion almost unknown in the animal world. Without leaders or encouragement, and terriby frightened by the scene they had beheld before the village, they had quickly given up any attempt to find his body. There had been none among them coolheaded enough to reason out which trail he had likely taken, and thus look for him by the ford. Likely they were already huddled in their thatched huts, waiting till daylight.

Then he called in the darkness. A heavy body brushed through the creepers, and stepping falsely, broke a twig. He thought at first that it might be one of the villagers, coming to look for him. But at once the step was silenced.

Warwick had a disturbing thought that the creature that had broken the twig had not gone away, but was crouching down, in a curious manner, in the deep shadows. Nahara had returned to her hunting.

IV

"Some time I, too, will be a hunter of tigers," Little Shikara told his mother when the beaters began to

circle through the bamboos. "To carry a gun beside Warwick Sahib—and to be honored in the circle under the tree!"

But his mother hardly listened. She was quivering with fright. She had seen the last part of the drama in front of the village; and she was too frightened even to notice the curious imperturbability of her little son. But there was no orderly retreat after Little Shikara had heard the two reports of the rifle. At first there were only the shouts of the beaters, singularly high-pitched, much running back and forth in the shadows, and then a pell-mell scurry to the shelter of the villages.

For a few minutes there was wild excitement at the village gates. Warwick Sahib was dead, they said—they had heard the shots and run to the place of firing, and beat up and down through the bamboos; and Warwick Sahib had surely been killed and carried off by the tigress. This dreadful story told, most of the villagers went to hide at once in their huts; only a little circle of the bravest men hovered at the gate. They watched with drawn faces the growing darkness.

But there was one among them who was not yet a man grown; a boy so small that he could hover, unnoticed, in the very smallest of the terrible shadow-patches. He was Little Shikara, and he was shocked to the very depths of his worshipping heart. For Warwick had been his hero, the greatest man of all time, and he felt himself burning with indignation that the beaters should return so soon. And it was a curious fact that he had not as yet been infected with the contagion of terror that was being passed from man to man among the villagers. Perhaps his indignation was too absorbing an emotion to leave room for terror, and perhaps, far down in his childish spirit, he was made of different stuff. He was a child of the jungle, and perhaps he had shared of that great imperturbability and impassiveness that is the eternal trait of the wildernesses.

He went up to one of the younger beaters who had told and retold a story of catching a glimpse of Nahara in the thickets until no one was left to tell it to. He was standing silent, and Little Shikara thought it possible that he might reach his ears.

"Give ear, Puran," he pleaded. "Didst thou look for his body beside the ford over Tarai stream?"

"Nay, little one—though I passed within one hundred paces."

"Dost thou not know that he and Singhai would of a certainty cross at the ford to reach the fringe of jungle from which he might watch the eastern field? Some of you looked on the trail beside the ford, but none looked at the ford itself. And the sound of the rifle seemed to come from thence."

"But why did he not call out?"

"Dead men could not call, but at least ye might have frightened Nahara from the body. But perhaps he is wounded, unable to speak, and lies there still——"

But Puran had found another listener for his story, and speedily forgot the boy. He hurried over to another of the villagers, Khusru the hunter.

"Did no one look by the ford?" he asked, almost sobbing. "For that is the place he had gone."

The native's eyes seemed to light. "*Hai*, little one, thou hast thought of what thy elders had forgotten. There is level land there, and clear. And I shall go at the first ray of dawn——"

"But not to-night, Khusru——?"

"Nay, little sinner! Wouldst thou have me torn to pieces?"

Lastly Little Shikara went to his own father, and they had a moment's talk at the outskirts of the throng. But the answer was nay—just the same. Even his brave father would not go to look for the body until daylight came. The boy felt his skin prickling all over.

"But perhaps he is only wounded—and left to die. If I go and return with word that he is there, wilt thou take others and go out and bring him in?"

"*Thou* goest!" His father broke forth in a great roar of laughter. "Why, thou little hawk! One would think that thou wert a hunter of tigers thyself!"

Little Shikara blushed beneath the laughter. For he was a very boyish little boy in most ways. But it seemed to him that his sturdy young heart was about to break open from bitterness. All of them agreed that Warwick Sahib, perhaps wounded and dying, might be lying by the ford, but none of them would venture forth to see. Unknowing, he was beholding the expression of a certain age-old trait of human nature. Men do not fight ably in the dark. They need their eyes, and they particularly require a definite object to give them determination. If these villagers knew for certain that the Protector of the Poor lay wounded or even dead beside the ford, they would have rallied bravely, encouraged one another with words and oaths, and gone forth to rescue him; but they wholly lacked the courage to venture again into the jungle on any such blind quest as Little Shikara suggested.

But the boy's father should not have laughed. He should have remembered the few past occasions when his straight little son had gone into the jungle alone; and that remembrance should have silenced him. The difficulty lay in the fact that he supposed his boy and he were of the same flesh, and that Little Shikara shared his own great dread of the night-curtained jungle. In this he was very badly mistaken. Little Shikara had an inborn understanding and love of the jungle; and except for such material dangers as that of Nahara, he was not afraid of it at all. He had no superstitions in regard to it. Perhaps he was too young. But the main thing that the laugh did was to set off, as a match sets off powder, a whole heartful of unexploded indignation in Shikara's breast. These villagers not only had deserted their patron and protector, but also they had laughed at the thought of rescue! His own father had laughed at him.

Little Shikara silently left the circle of villagers and turned into the darkness.

At once the jungle silence closed round him. He hadn't dreamed that the noise of the villagers would die so quickly. Although he could still see the flame of the fire at the village gate

behind him, it was almost as if he had at once dropped off into another world. Great flowers poured perfume down upon him, and at seemingly a great distance he heard the faint murmur of the wind.

At first, deep down in his heart, he had really not intended to go all the way. He had expected to steal clear to the outer edge of the firelight; and then stand listening to the darkness for such impressions as the jungle would choose to give him. But there had been no threshold, no interlude of preparation. The jungle in all its mystery had folded about him at once.

He trotted softly down the elephant trail, a dim, fleet shadow that even the keen eyes of Nahara could scarcely have seen. At first he was too happy to be afraid. He was always happy when the jungle closed round him. Besides, if Nahara had killed, she would be full-fed by now and not to be feared. Little Shikara hastened on, trembling all over with a joyous sort of excitement.

If a single bird had flapped its wings in the branches, if one little rodent had stirred in the underbrush, Little Shikara would likely have turned back. But the jungle-gods, knowing their son, stilled all the forest voices. He crept on, still looking now and again over his shoulder to see the village fire. It still made a bright yellow triangle in the dusk behind him. He didn't stop to think that he was doing a thing most grown natives and many white men would not have dared to do—to follow a jungle trail unarmed at night. If he had stopped to think at all he simply would have been unable to go on. He was only following his instincts, voices that such forces as maturity and grown-up intelligence and self-consciousness obscure in older men—and the terror of the jungle could not touch him. He went straight to do what service he could for the white sahib that was one of his lesser gods.

Time after time he halted, but always he pushed on a few more feet. Now he was over halfway to the ford, clear to the forks in the trail. And then he turned about with a little gasp of fear.

The light from the village had gone out. The thick foliage of the jungle had come between.

He was really frightened now. It wasn't that he was afraid he couldn't get back. The trail was broad and hard and quite gray in the moonlight. But those far-off beams of light had been a solace to his spirit, a reminder that he had not yet broken all ties with the village. He halted, intending to turn back.

Then a thrill began at his scalp and went clear to his bare toes. Faint through the jungle silences he heard Warwick Sahib calling to his faithless beaters. The voice had an unmistakable quality of distress.

Certain of the villagers—a very few of them—said afterward that Little Shikara continued on because he was afraid to go back. They said that he looked upon the Heaven-born sahib as a source of all power, in whose protection no harm could befall him, and he sped toward him because the distance was shorter than back to the haven of fire at the

village. But those who could look deeper into Little Shikara's soul knew different. In some degree at least he hastened on down that jungle trail of peril because he knew that his idol was in distress, and by laws that went deep he knew he must go to his aid.

V

The first few minutes after Warwick had heard a living step in the thickets he spent in trying to reload his rifle. He carried other cartridges in the right-hand trousers pocket, but after a few minutes of futile effort it became perfectly evident that he was not able to reach them. His right arm was useless, and the fingers of his left, lacerated by the mugger's bite, refused to take hold.

He had, however, three of the five shells the rifle held still in his gun. The single question that remained was whether or not they would be of use to him.

The rifle lay half under him, its stock protruding from beneath his body. With the elbow of his left arm he was able to work it out. Considering the difficulties under which he worked, he made amazingly few false motions; and yet he worked with swiftness. Warwick was a man who had been schooled and trained by many dangers; he had learned to face them with open eyes and steady hands, to judge with unclouded thought the exact percentage of his chances. He knew now that he must work swiftly. The shape in the shadow was not going to wait all night.

But at that moment the hope of preserving his life that he had clung to until now broke like a bubble in the sunlight. He could not lift the gun to swing and aim it at a shape in the darkness. With his mutilated hands he could not cock the strong-springed hammer. And if he could do both these things with his fumbling, bleeding, lacerated fingers, his right hand could not be made to pull the trigger. Warwick Sahib knew at last just where he stood. Yet if human sight could have penetrated that dusk, it would have beheld no change of expression in the lean face.

An English gentleman lay at the frontier of death. But that occasioned neither fawning nor a loss of his rigid self-control.

Two things remained, however, that he might do. One was to call and continue to call, as long as life lasted in his body. He knew perfectly that more than once in the history of India a tiger had been kept at a distance, at least for a short period of time, by shouts alone. In that interlude, perhaps help might come from the village. The second thing was almost as impossible as raising and firing the rifle; but by the luck of the gods he might achieve it. He wanted to find Singhai's knife and hold it compressed in his palm.

It wasn't that he had any vain hopes of repelling the tiger's attack with a single knife-blade that would be practically impossible for his mutilated hand to hold. Nahara had five or so knife-blades in every paw and a whole set of them in her mouth. She could stand on four legs and fight, and Warwick could not lift himself on one elbow and yet wield the blade. But there were other

things to be done with blades, even held loosely in the palm, at a time like this.

He knew rather too much of the way of tigers. They do not always kill swiftly. It is the tiger way to tease, long moments, with half-bared talons; to let the prey crawl away a few feet for the rapture of leaping at it again; to fondle with an exquisite cruelty for moments that seem endless to its prey. A knife, on the other hand, kills quickly. Warwick much preferred the latter death.

And even as he called, again and again, he began to feel about in the grass with his lacerated hand for the hilt of the knife. Nahara was steadily stealing toward him through the shadows.

The great tigress was at the height of her hunting madness. The earlier adventure of the evening when she had missed her stroke, the stir and tumult of the beaters in the wood, her many days of hunger, had all combined to intensify her passion. And finally there had come the knowledge, in subtle ways, that two of her own kind of game were lying wounded and helpless beside the ford.

But even the royal tiger never forgets some small measure of its caution. She did not charge at once. The game looked so easy that it was in some way suggestive of a trap. She crept forward, a few feet at a time. The wild blood began to leap through the great veins. The hair went stiff on the neck muscles.

But Warwick shouted; and the sound for an instant appalled her. She lurked in the shadows. And then, as she made a false step, Warwick heard her for the first time.

Again she crept forward, to pause when Warwick raised his voice the second time. The man knew enough to call at intervals rather than continuously. A long, continued outcry would very likely stretch the tiger's nerves to a breaking point and hurl her into a frenzy that would probably result in a death-dealing charge. Every few seconds he called again. In the intervals between the tiger crept forward. Her excitement grew upon her. She crouched lower. Her sinewy tail had whipped softly at first; now it was lashing almost to her sides. And finally it began to have a slight vertical movement that Warwick, fortunately for his spirit, could not see.

Then the little light that the moon poured down was suddenly reflected in Nahara's eyes. All at once they burned out of the dusk; two blue-green circles of fire fifty feet distant in the darkness. At that Warwick gasped—for the first time. In another moment the great cat would be in range—and he had not yet found the knife. Nothing remained to believe but that it was lost in the mud of the ford, fifty feet distant, and that the last dread avenue of escape was cut off.

But at that instant the gasp gave way to a whispered oath of wonder. Some living creature was running lightly down the trail toward him—soft, light feet that came with amazing swiftness. For once in his life Warwick did not know where he stood. For once he was the chief figure of a situation he did not entirely

understand. He tried to probe into the darkness with his tired eyes.

"Here I am!" he called. The tiger, starting to creep forward once more, halted at the voice. A small straight figure sped like an arrow out of the thickets and halted at his side.

It was such an astounding appearance as for an instant completely paralyzes the mental faculties. Warwick's first emotion was simply a great and hopeless astonishment. Long inured to the mystery of the jungle, he thought he had passed the point where any earthly happening could actually bewilder him. But in spite of it, in spite of the fire-eyed peril in the darkness, he was quite himself when he spoke. The voice that came out of the silence was wholly steady —a kindly, almost amused voice of one who knows life as it is and who has mastered his own destiny.

"Who in the world?" he asked in the vernacular.

"It is I—Little Shikara," a tremulous voice answered. Except for the tremor he could not keep from his tone, he spoke as one man to another.

Warwick knew at once that Little Shikara was not yet aware of the presence of the tiger fifty feet distant in the shadows. But he knew nothing else. The whole situation was beyond his ken.

But his instincts were manly and true. "Then run speedily, little one," he whispered, "back to the village. There is danger here in the dark."

Little Shikara tried to speak, and he swallowed painfully. A lump had come in his throat that at first would not let him talk. "Nay, Protector of the Poor!" he answered. "I—I came alone. And I—I am thy servant."

Warwick's heart bounded. Not since his youth had left him to a gray world had his strong heart leaped in just this way before. "Merciful God!" he whispered in English. "Has a child come to save me?" Then he whipped again into the vernacular and spoke swiftly; for no further seconds were to be wasted. "Little Shikara, have you ever fired a gun?"

"No, Sahib——"

"Then lift it up and rest it across my body. Thou knowest how it is held——"

Little Shikara didn't know exactly, but he rested the gun on Warwick's body; and he had seen enough target practice to crook his finger about the trigger. And together, the strangest pair of huntsmen that the Indian stars ever looked down upon, they waited.

"It is Nahara," Warwick explained softly. For he had decided to be frank with Little Shikara, trusting all to the courage of a child. "It all depends on thee. Pull back the hammer with thy thumb."

Little Shikara obeyed. He drew it back until it clicked, and did not, as Warwick had feared, let it slip through his fingers back against the breach. "Yes, Sahib," he whispered breathlessly. His little brave heart seemed about to explode in his breast. But it was the test, and he knew he must not waver in the sahib's eyes.

"It is Nahara, and thou art a man," Warwick said again. "And now thou must wait until thou seest her eyes."

So they strained into the darkness; and in an instant more they saw again the two circles of greenish, smouldering fire. They were quite near now— Nahara was almost in leaping range.

"Thou wilt look through the little hole at the rear and then along the barrel," Warwick ordered swiftly, "and thou must see the two eyes along the little notch in front."

"I see, Sahib—and between the eyes," came the same breathless whisper. The little brown body held quite still. Warwick could not even feel it trembling against his own. For the moment, by virtue of some strange prank of Shiv, the jungle-gods were giving their own strength to this little brown son of theirs beside the ford.

"Thou wilt not jerk or move?"

"Nay, Sahib." And he spoke true. The world might break to pieces or blink out, but he would not throw off his aim by any terror motions. They could see the tiger's outline now— the lithe, low-hung body, the tail that twitched up and down.

"Then pull the trigger," Warwick whispered.

The whole jungle world rocked and trembled from the violence of the report.

When the villagers, aroused by the roar of the rifle and led by Khusru and Puran and Little Shikara's father, rushed down with their firebrands to the ford, their first thought was that they had come only to the presence of the dead. Three human beings lay very still beside the stream, and fifty feet in the shadows something else, that obviously was *not* a human being, lay very still, too. But they were not to have any such horror story to tell their wives. Only one of the three by the ford, Singhai, the gun-bearer, was even really unconscious; Little Shikara, the rifle still held lovingly in his arms, had gone into a half-faint from fear and nervous exhaustion, and Warwick Sahib had merely closed his eyes to the darting light of the firebrands. The only death that had occurred was that of Nahara the tigress—and she had a neat hole bored completely through her neck. To all evidence, she had never stirred after Little Shikara's bullet had gone home.

After much confusion and shouting and falling over one another, and gazing at Little Shikara as if he were some new kind of a ghost, the villagers got a stretcher each for Singhai and the Protector of the Poor. And when they got them well loaded into them, and Little Shikara had quite come to himself and was standing with some bewilderment in a circle of staring townspeople, a clear, commanding voice ordered that they all be silent. Warwick Sahib was going to make what was the nearest approach to a speech that he had made since various of his friends had decoyed him to a dinner in London some years before.

The words that he said, the short vernacular words that have a way of coming straight to the point, established Little Shikara as a legend through all that corner of British India. It was Little Shikara who had come alone through the jungle, said he; it was Little Shikara's shining eyes that had gazed along the barrel,

and it was his own brown finger that had pulled the trigger. Thus, said Warwick, he would get the bounty that the British Government offered —British rupees that to a child's eyes would be past counting. Thus in time, with Warwick's influence, his would be a great voice through all of India. For small as he was, and not yet grown, he was of the true breed.

After the shouting was done, Warwick turned to Little Shikara to see how he thought upon all these things. "Thou shalt have training for the army, little one, where thy good nerve will be of use, and thou shalt be a native officer, along with the sons of princes. I, myself, will see to it, for I do not hold my life so cheap that I will forget the thing that thou hast done to-night."

And he meant what he said. The villagers stood still when they saw his earnest face. "And what, little hawk, wilt thou have more?" he asked.

Little Shikara trembled and raised his eyes. "Only sometimes to ride with thee, in thy *howdah*, as thy servant, when thou again seekest the tiger."

The whole circle laughed at this. They were just human, after all. Their firebrands were held high, and gleamed on Little Shikara's dusky face, and made a lustre in his dark eyes. The circle, roaring with laughter, did not hear the sahib's reply, but they did see him nod his head.

"I would not dare go without thee now," Warwick told him.

And thus Little Shikara's dreams came true—to be known through many villages as a hunter of tigers, and a brave follower and comrade of the forest trails. And thus he came into his own—in those far-off glades of Burma, in the jungles of the Manipur.

THE WAKE[1]

DONN BYRNE

At times the muffled conversation in the kitchen resembled the resonant humming of bees, and again, when it became animated, it sounded like the distant cackling of geese. Then there would come a pause; and it would begin again with sibilant whispers, and end in a chorus of dry laughter that somehow suggested the crackling of burning logs.

Occasionally a figure would open the bedroom door, pass the old man as he sat huddled in his chair, never throwing a glance at him, and go and kneel by the side of the bed where the body was. They usually prayed for two or three minutes, then rose and walked on tiptoe to the kitchen, where they joined the company. Sometimes they came in twos, less often in threes, but they did precisely the same thing—prayed for precisely the same time, and left the room on tiptoe with the same creak of shoe and rustle of clothes that sounded so intensely loud throughout the room.

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They might have been following instructions laid down in a ritual.

The old man wished to heaven they would stay away. He had been sitting in his chair for hours, thinking, until his head was in a whirl. He wanted to concentrate his thoughts, but somehow he felt that the mourners were preventing him.

The five candles at the head of the bed distracted him. He was glad when the figure of one of the mourners shut off the glare for a few minutes. He was also distracted by the five chairs standing around the room like sentries on post and the little table by the window with its crucifix and holy-water font. He wanted to keep thinking of "herself," as he called her, lost in the immensity of the oaken bed. He had been looking at the pinched face with its faint suspicion of blue since early that morning. He was very much awed by the nun's hood that concealed the back of the head, and the stiffly posed arms and the small hands in their white-cotton gloves moved him to a deep pity.

Somebody touched him on the shoulder. "Michael James."

It was big Dan Murray, a gaunt red farmer, who had been best man at his wedding.

"Michael James."

"What is it?"

"I hear young Kennedy's in the village."

"What of that?"

"I thought it was best for you to know."

Murray waited a moment, then he went out, on tiptoe, as everybody did, his movements resembling the stilted gestures of a mechanical toy.

Down the drive Michael heard steps coming. Then a struggle and a shrill giggle. Some young people were coming to the wake, and he knew a boy had tried to kiss a girl in the dark. He felt a dull surge of resentment.

She was nineteen when he married her; he was sixty-three. Because he had over two hundred acres of land and many head of milch and grazing cattle and a huge house that rambled like a barrack, her father had given her to him; and young Kennedy, who had been her father's steward for years, and had been saving to buy a house for her, was thrown over like a bale of mildewed hay.

Kennedy had made several violent scenes. Michael James remembered the morning of the wedding. Kennedy waylaid the bridal-party coming out of the church. He was drunk.

"Mark me," he had said, very quietly for a drunken man—"mark me. If anything ever happens to that girl at your side, Michael James, I'll murder you. I'll murder you in cold blood. Do you understand?"

Michael James could be forgiving that morning. "Run away and sober up, lad," he had said, "and come up to the house and dance."

Kennedy had gone around the countryside for weeks, drunk every night, making threats against the old farmer. And then a wily sergeant of the Connaught Rangers had trapped him and taken him off to Aldershot.

Now he was home on furlough, and something had happened to her, and he was coming up to make good his threat.

What had happened to her? Michael James didn't understand. He had given her everything he could. She had taken it all with a demure thanks, but he had never had anything of her but apathy. She had gone around the house apathetically, growing a little thinner every day, and then a few days ago she had lain down, and last night she had died, apathetically.

And young Kennedy was coming up for an accounting to-night. "Well," thought Michael James, "let him come!"

Silence suddenly fell over the company in the kitchen. Then a loud scraping as they stood up, and a harsher grating as chairs were pushed back. The door of the bedroom opened and the red flare from the fire and lamps of the kitchen blended into the sickly yellow candle-light of the bedroom.

The parish priest walked in. His closely cropped white hair, strong, ruddy face, and erect back gave him more the appearance of a soldier than a clergyman. He looked at the bed a moment, and then at Michael James.

"Oh, you mustn't take it like that, man," he said. "You mustn't take it like that. You must bear up." He was the only one who spoke in his natural voice.

He turned to a lumbering farmer's wife who had followed him in, and asked about the hour of the funeral. She answered in a hoarse whisper, dropping a courtesy.

"You ought to go out and take a walk," he told Michael James. "You oughtn't to stay in here all the time." And he left the room.

Michael James paid no attention. His mind was wandering to strange fantasies he could not keep out of his head. Pictures crept in and out of his brain, joined as by some thin filament. He thought somehow of her soul, and then wondered what a soul was like. And then he thought of a dove, and then of a bat fluttering through the dark, and then of a bird lost at twilight. He thought of it as some lonely flying thing with a long journey before it and no place to rest. He could imagine it uttering the vibrant, plaintive cry of a peewit. And then it struck him with a great sense of pity that the night was cold.

In the kitchen they were having tea. The rattle of the crockery sounded very distinctly. He could distinguish the sharp, staccato ring when a cup was laid in a saucer, and the nervous rattle when cup and saucer were passed from one hand to the other. Spoons struck china with a faint metallic tinkle. He felt as if all the sounds were made at the back of his neck, and the crash seemed to burst in his head.

Dan Murray creaked into the room. "Michael James," he whispered, "you ought to take something. Have a bite to eat. Take a cup of tea. I'll bring it in to you."

"Oh let me alone, Daniel," he answered. He felt he would like to kick him and curse him while doing so.

"You must take something," Murray's voice rose from a whisper to a low, argumentative sing-song. "You know it's not natural. You've got to eat."

"No, thank you, Daniel," he answered. It was as if he were talking to

a boy who was good-natured but tiresome. "I don't feel like eating. Maybe afterward I will."

"Michael James," Murray continued.

"Well, what is it, Daniel?"

"Don't you think I'd better go down and see young Kennedy and tell him how foolish it would be of him to come up here and start fighting? You know it isn't right. Hadn't I better go down? He's at home now."

"Let that alone, Daniel, I tell you." The thought of Murray breaking into the matter that was between himself and the young man filled him with a sense of injured delicacy.

"I know he's going to make trouble."

"Let me handle that, like a good fellow, and leave me by myself, Daniel, if you don't mind."

"Ah well, sure. You know best." And Murray crept out of the room.

As the door opened Michael could hear some one singing in a subdued voice and many feet tapping like drums in time with the music. They had to pass the night outside, and it was the custom, but the singing irritated him. He could fancy heads nodding and bodies swaying from side to side with the rhythm. He recognized the tune, and it began to run through his head, and he could not put it out of it. The lilt of it captured him, and suddenly he began thinking of the wonderful brain that musicians must have to compose music. And then his thoughts switched to a picture he had seen of a man in a garret with a fiddle beneath his chin.

He straightened himself up a little, for sitting crouched forward as he was put a strain on his back, and he unconsciously sat upright to ease himself. And as he sat up he caught a glimpse of the cotton gloves on the bed, and it burst in on him that the first time he had seen her she was walking along the road with young Kennedy one Sunday afternoon, and they were holding hands. When they saw him they let go suddenly, and grew very red, giggling in a half-hearted way to hide their embarrassment. And he remembered that he had passed them by without saying anything, but with a good-humored, sly smile on his face, and a mellow feeling within him, and a sage reflection to himself that young folks will be young folks, and what harm was there in courting a little on a Sunday afternoon when the week's work had been done?

And he remembered other days on which he had met her and Kennedy; and then how the conviction had come into his mind that here was a girl for him to marry; and then how, quietly and equably, he had gone about getting her and marrying her, as he would go about buying a team of horses or make arrangements for cutting the hay.

Until the day he married her he felt as a driver feels who has his team under perfect control, and who knows every bend and curve of the road he is taking. But since that day he had been thinking about her and worrying and wondering exactly where he stood, until everything in the day was just the puzzle of her, and he was like a driver with a restive pair of

horses who knows his way no farther than the next bend. And then he knew she was the biggest thing in his life.

The situation as it appeared to him he had worked out with difficulty, for he was not a thinking man. What thinking he did dealt with the price of harvest machinery and the best time of the year for buying and selling. He worked it out this way: here was this girl dead, whom he had married, and who should have married another man, who was coming to-night to kill him. To-night sometime the world would stop for him. He felt no longer a personal entity—he was merely part of a situation. It was as if he were a piece in a chess problem—any moment the player might move and solve the play by taking a pawn.

Realities had taken on a dim, unearthly quality. Occasionally a sound from the kitchen would strike him like an unexpected note in a harmony; the whiteness of the bed would flash out like a piece of color in a subdued painting.

There was a shuffling in the kitchen and the sound of feet going toward the door. The latch lifted with a rasp. He could hear the hoarse, deep tones of a few boys, and the high-pitched sing-song intonations of girls. He knew they were going for a few miles' walk along the roads. He went over and raised the blind on the window. Overhead the moon showed like a spot of bright saffron. A sort of misty haze seemed to cling around the bushes and trees. The out-houses stood out white, like buildings in a mysterious city. Somewhere there was the metallic whir of a grasshopper, and in the distance a loon boomed again and again.

The little company passed down the yard. There was the sound of a smothered titter, then a playful resounding slap, and a gurgling laugh from one of the boys.

As he stood by the window he heard some one open the door and stand on the threshold.

"Are you coming, Alice?" some one asked.

Michael James listened for the answer. He was taking in eagerly all outside things. He wanted something to pass the time of waiting, as a traveler in a railway station reads trivial notices carefully while waiting for a train that may take him to the ends of the earth.

"Alice, are you coming?" was asked again.

There was no answer.

"Well, you needn't if you don't want to," he heard in an irritated tone, and the speaker tramped down toward the road in a dudgeon. He recognized the figure of Flanagan, the foot-ball player, who was always having little spats with the girl he was going to marry. He discovered with a sort of shock that he was slightly amused at this incident.

From the road there came the shrill scream of one of the girls who had gone out, and then a chorus of laughter. And against the background of the figure behind him and of young Kennedy he began wondering at the relationship of man and woman. He had no word for it, for "love" was a term he thought should be confined to story-books, a word to be suspicious of as sounding affected, a word to be

scoffed at. But of this relationship he had a vague understanding. He thought of it as a criss-cross of threads binding one person to the other, or as a web which might be light and easily broken, or which might have the strength of steel cables and which might work into knots here and there and become a tangle that could crush those caught in it.

It puzzled him how a thing of indefinable grace, of soft words on June nights, of vague stirrings under moonlight, of embarrassing hand-clasps and fearful glances, might become, as it had become in the case of himself, Kennedy, and what was behind him, a thing of blind, malevolent force, a thing of sinister silence, a shadow that crushed.

And then it struck him with a sense of guilt that his mind was wandering from her, and he turned away from the window. He thought how much more peaceful it would be for a body to lie out in the moonlight than on a somber oak bedstead in a shadowy room with yellow, guttering candle-light and five solemn-looking chairs. And he thought again how strange it was that on a night like this Kennedy should come as an avenger seeking to kill rather than as a lover with high hope in his breast.

Murray slipped into the room again. There was a frown on his face and his tone was aggressive.

"I tell you, Michael James, we'll have to do something about it." There as a truculent note in his whisper.

The farmer did not answer.

"Will you let me go down for the police? A few words to the sergeant will keep him quiet."

Michael James felt a pity for Murray. The idea of pitting a sergeant of police against the tragedy that was coming seemed ludicrous to him. It was like pitting a school-boy against a hurricane.

"Listen to me, Dan," he replied. "How do you know Kennedy is coming up at all?"

"Flanagan, the football-player, met him and talked to him. He said that Kennedy was clean mad."

"Do they know about it in the kitchen?"

"Not a word." There was a pause.

"Well, listen here, now. Go right back there and don't say a word about it. Wouldn't it be foolish if you went down to the police and he didn't come at all? And if he does come I can manage him. And if I can't I'll call you. Does that satisfy you?" And he sent Murray out, grumbling.

As the door closed he felt that the last refuge had been abandoned. He was to wrestle with destiny alone. He had no doubt that Kennedy would make good his vow, and he felt a sort of curiosity as to how it would be done. Would it be with hands, or with a gun, or some other weapon? He hoped it would be the gun. The idea of coming to hand-grips with the boy filled him with a strange terror.

The thought that within ten minutes or a half-hour or an hour he would be dead did not come home to him. It was the physical act that frightened him. He felt as if he were terribly alone and a cold wind were blowing about him and penetrating every pore of his body. There was a

contraction around his breast-bone and a shiver in his shoulders.

His idea of death was that he would pitch headlong, as from a high tower, into a bottomless dark space.

He went over to the window again and looked out toward the barn. From a chink in one of the shutters there was a thread of yellow candle-light. He knew there were men there playing cards to pass the time.

Then terror came on him. The noise in the kitchen was subdued. Most of the mourners had gone home, and those who were staying the night were drowsy and were dozing over the fire. He felt he wanted to rush among them and to cry to them to protect him, and to cower behind them and to close them around him in a solid circle. He felt that eyes were upon him, looking at his back from the bed, and he was afraid to turn around because he might look into the eyes.

She had always respected him, he remembered, and he did not want to lose her respect now; and the fear that he would lose it set his shoulders back and steadied the grip of his feet on the floor.

And then there flashed before him the thought of people who kill, of lines of soldiery rushing on trenches, of a stealthy, cowering man who slips through a jail door at dawn, and of a figure he had read of in books—a sinister figure with an ax and a red cloak.

As he looked down the yard he saw a figure turn in the gate and come toward the house. It seemed to walk slowly and heavily, as if tired. He knew it was Kennedy. He opened the kitchen door and slipped outside.

The figure coming up the pathway seemed to swim toward him. Then it would blur and disappear and then appear again vaguely. The beating of his heart was like the regular sound of a ticking clock. Space narrowed until he felt he could not breathe. He went forward a few paces. The light from the bedroom window streamed forward in a broad, yellow beam. He stepped into it as into a river.

"She's dead," he heard himself saying. "She's dead." And then he knew that Kennedy was standing in front of him.

The flap of the boy's hat threw a heavy shadow over his face, his shoulders were braced, and his right hand, the farmer could see, was thrust deeply into his coat pocket.

"Aye, she's dead," Michael James repeated. "You knew that, didn't you?" It was all he could think of saying. "You'll come in and see her, won't you?" He had forgotten what Kennedy had come for. He was dazed. He didn't know what to say.

Kennedy moved a little. The light from the window struck him full in the face, and Michael James realized with a shock that it was as grim and thin-lipped as he had pictured it. A prayer rose in his throat, and then fear seemed to leave him all at once. He raised his head. The right hand had left the pocket now. And then suddenly he saw that Kennedy was looking into the room, and he knew he could see, through the little panes of glass, the huge bedstead and the body on it. And he felt a desire to throw himself between Kennedy and

it, as he might jump between a child and a threatening danger.

He turned away his head, instinctively—why, he could not understand, but he felt that he should not look at Kennedy's face.

Over in the barn voices rose suddenly. They were disputing over the cards. There was some one complaining feverishly and some one arguing truculently, and another voice striving to make peace. They died away in a dull hum, and Michael James heard the boy sobbing.

"You mustn't do that," he said. "You mustn't do that." And he patted him on the shoulders. He felt as if something unspeakably tense had relaxed and as if life were swinging back into balance. His voice shook and he continued patting. "You'll come in now, and I'll leave you alone there." He took him under the arm.

He felt the pity he had for the body on the bed envelop Kennedy, too, and a sense of peace came over him. It was as though a son of his had been hurt and had come to him for comfort, and he was going to comfort him. In some vague way he thought of Easter-time.

He stopped at the door for a moment.

"It's all right, laddie," he said. "It's all right," and he lifted the latch.

As they went in he felt somehow as if high walls had crumbled and the three of them had stepped into the light of day.

THE TODAY TOMORROW[1]

MARGARET PRESCOTT MONTAGUE

Stranger, you say you ain't been in the mountains of West Virginia so very long? Then I reckon you ain't heard all the tales the fellers tells about Tony Beaver, and that log camp of his'n up Eel River.

Well, *sirs!* Tony cert'nly *is* a great cuss! And if you'll set a spell now, and spread your years, I'll pour a tale into 'em about how Tony hitched that powerful yoke of oxen he's got him up Eel River onto the wheels of time, and had time running all up and down the days, back'ards and for'ards, whichsoever way he said for it to go.

I reckon that was about one of the *most my*rac'lous things Tony ever pulled off—and dangerous too when you come to study on it; and yit he done it all for nothing in this world but to satisfy a child, what was jest a little feller going on five years old.

That little feller, he used to play round Tony's log camp. He had a crippled foot and couldn't walk so very good, so all the hands used to tote him; but his fav'rite riding place was Tony Beaver's shoulder, and I jest b'lieve he thought Tony pulled the sun up with a string in the morning, and let her run down agin at night. Seemed like Tony he tuck a dee-light in doing all sorts of onusual things to please that child. Maybe you've seen fellers take a bucket of water and swing it round so fast that

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never a drop will drap out? Well, Tony he went 'em one better'n that. When he got his bucket going good, he stopped it right *spang upside down* over his head, and not a drop spilled! I'll be dogged if *I* know how the feller done it! And the hands they was all jest carried away by the sight; but that kid, he never batted a eye. "I knowed *you* could do it Tony!" he says. "Yes, *sir*, fellers!" he says, telling 'em all, "Tony Beaver *he* kin do it all right!"

Well, that little feller's faith in him tickled Tony right much. It was a kind of a offset to ole Preacher Moses Mutters, what was allus a-hanging round camp, and sing-songing out, "You *can't* do it, Tony—it's ergin reason!"

Mutters wa'n't that preacher feller's real name, that was jest a way the hands all had of calling him, 'cause he was allus muttering round, and so gloomy like. That ole brother, he set a great store by reason, and he was mightily outdone by all the *on*-reasonable jobs Tony pulled off up Eel River. So thar Tony was sorter betwixt the two of 'em. The preacher allus tuning up, "You *can't* do it, Tony—it's ergin reason"; and the little feller, jest looking at him so trustful, and saying, "I knowed *you* could do it, Tony!"

Well then, one day, that little feller he tuck down sick, and when Tony got the word of it, he jest fa'rly tore up Jack till he got aholt of the finest doctor in the county. The doc', he come up Eel River, and went up Flint Holler, whar the little feller lived in a log cabin with his mammy, and he looked the young-un all over, and had him to put out his tongue, and all like that, and then he dosed him some, and 'lowed he'd be all right tomorrow.

"I'll be all right tomorrow," the little feller says, saying it after him mighty trustful like.

Well, Stranger, right then and thar was whar all the trouble commenced. The next morning when Tony went up Flint Holler, and round Hare Hill, to the little feller's cabin, he found the young-un all in a turrible fret.

Tony, he come right inside—though it's the truth, he don't like to go under a roof, or tromp on sawed boards—and steps over to the bed, whar the little feller was laying all kivered up under a quilt of the Rising Sun pattern.

"Hey now! What's the trouble, Buddy?" Tony asks him.

"I can't git better, Tony," the little feller says kinder pitiful.

"Why, Honey, the doc' said you'd be better today," Tony tells him.

"No, Tony! no!" the young-un says, all wrought up; "he said I'd be better *tomorrow!*"

Tony he busts out with a great laugh at that. "Why, Honey," he says, "today *is* tomorrow!"

"No, it *ain't*, Tony!" that little buddy answers him back. "This ain't tomorrow—it's jest *today!* An—an—" he says, all filling up to cry, "how kin *today* be tomorrow? We can't find tomorrow, Tony. Mammy and me been a-looking and looking all night for it, but today jest kep' right on, and on, and never *did* git to be tomorrow! I want tomorrow, Tony," he says, crying; "I can't git better till it comes."

Thar you see how it was, Stranger —the young-un had got all balled up in his mind, and jest *couldn't* git it figured out that today was tomorrow. And when you come to study it over, you'll see thar was some sense in what he said, for it cert'nly is *so*, Stranger—today *ain't* tomorrow—it jest natcherly *can't* be! But if it ain't, then whar *is* tomorrow? Even watching it very close, a person can't hardly say when today quits and tomorrow commences. And it's the truth, I don't know myself if today ever *does* git to be tomorrow—so it wa'n't no wonder that sick child was kinder twisted up over it.

"No, Tony! No! Today's *today*—it *ain't* tomorrow!" he kep' on saying to everything Tony told him. "I can't git better till it's tomorrow—*you* git tomorrow for me," he says putting his hand in Tony's so trustful like; "*you* kin do it easy, Tony!"

Well now I reckon that was jest about the biggest job Tony Beaver ever had handed out to him. But he ain't never the feller to turn a job down 'count of it's looking big, so he scratched his head a spell, and then he says, "Well Buddy, I'll do the best I kin." And then he come on back to camp to figger how he was to do it.

Ole Brother Mutters 'lowed the way was to set up all night with the little feller, and when the clock struck twelve to tell him now it was tomorrow. "That's the reasonable way of doing it, Tony," he says.

"But the reasonable way ain't *my* way," Tony tells him. "And more'n that, you know I ain't never a hand to go under a roof and tromp on sawed boards."

Howsomever the hands all 'lowed Brother Mutters was right and they got Tony pusuaded to try that way, though he done it ergin his better jedgment.

Well, that night Tony he went up Flint Holler to the little feller's cabin, and fetched hisself in a big gray rock—what still had some moss hanging on it—to set on; for Tony he never will set in a cheer. And he told the little boy that tomorrow would be along late in the night, and he'd be thar to ketch it.

So the little feller went on to sleep mighty trustful and satisfied; and Tony sets down on his gray rock by the fire, and dozes along till it come nigh midnight. Then he tiptoes over to the bed, and whispers that tomorrow would be thar when the clock struck.

"*When the clock strikes!*" The little feller whispers back in a kind of a sacred voice, like he was at prayer-meeting. "O Tony!" he says, "let me set in your lap! I want to be setting thar when tomorrow comes."

So Tony he wraps the Rising Sun quilt round him, and sets down on his gray rock, with the little feller on his knee—and I reckon it was a funny sight to see Tony Beaver setting under a roof!

Well, after a little bit, the clock commenced to wheeze like it was cl'aring its throat for sumpin big, and fetches out twelve strokes, and Tony, hollers, "Here's your tomorrow, honey!"

The little feller looks all about him, up at the joists, and down at the floor, and then back ergin at the clock, and seems like he was kinder blank, like

he'd expected tomorrow to jump out from somewhares and be different.

"Is it tomorrow, Tony?" he asks, sorter doubtful.

"Yes, *sure* it is!" Tony says. "And now today you'll git better."

Well right thar Tony slipped up. He sure oughter of knowed better'n to say that today word.

"You said *today!*" the little feller hollers out, ketching him right up. "And this *is* today, it *ain't* tomorrow! Tony, you *fooled* me!" And with that he busts out crying like his very heart was broke. "Put me back in bed," he says. "You fooled me, Tony, I—I don't want to set on your lap no more."

II

Well, that pretty nigh killed Tony, and he come on back to camp fa'rly raging. He give one holler that fetched all the hands out of the bunkhouse on the jump, and standing up thar in the moonlight, looking powerful tall, he told 'em all what had happened.

"And *that's* what comes of *me* going under a roof, and trying to be reasonable! And *now*," he hollers out, "I'm *done* with reason! And by the sap of all the white oak trees running in spring, and by the breath of the gray rocks, I'll fine me a *on*reasonable way of doing it!"

You better b'lieve all the hands kep' mighty still at that, for they knowed better'n to cheep when Tony busts loose with them cuss words. But course Brother Mutters had to tune up.

"Yer *can't* do it, Tony! Yer can't put *back* the wheels of time, and yer can't put 'em for'ard neither!"

"I can't, can't I!" Tony hollers at him. And with that he let loose sech a blast of a look at that preacher, that I reckon it would of blowed him right off the bank, and down into Eel River itself, if Big Henry, what's one of Tony's stoutest hands, hadn't of seen it coming, and ketched aholt of the ole feller jest in time.

"Yoke up them oxen of mine!" Tony hollers out, and all hands jumped like he'd cracked a pistol.

Now, Stranger, them oxen of Tony's air jest about the *most* monstrous animals the world ever *did* see. Maybe you recollect a ole song that runs kinder like this,—

Tony Beaver had a ox,
I mind the day that he was born;
It tuck a jay bird seven years
To fly from horn to horn.

Well *I* jest b'lieve that's nuthing in this world but a dog-goned lie. But I know them beasts must be all out of the common, or folks wouldn't tell sech tales about 'em.

Well, when they fetched 'em round, Tony he tuck a powerful stout log chain, and hitched one end of it to the yoke, and without saying nuthing to nobody, he went off into the woods with the t'other end. The chain it onwound, and onwound, and went crawling away into the bresh after Tony Beaver, looking like the biggest nastiest kind of a snake a person ever *did* see. After a right smart spell, the chain it quit onrolling and lay still, 'cept that every once in a while, it'd give a kind of a jerk, like Tony was fooling with it at the t'other end.

But whoop-*ee!*—all to onct that chain it gives a powerful jump and commenced to run back outer the the woods like the dogs was after it! Then d'rectly there come the awfulest kind of a battle betwixt Tony Beaver and that log chain. Course the hands they couldn't see nuthing 'cept the chain's end of it—but that was a plenty! The dog-goned thing it wriggled and wrastled, and lashed itself up and down, hither and yon, like it was fighting for all it was wuth to bust loose and git on outer them woods. And every now and ergin it'd hump itself up in the middle, like you've seen a inch worm do, and strain and strain to pull free thataway. But in the end Tony he won, and after another turrible thrashing and lashing of itself, that jest natcherly cut the bresh all to pieces anywhares near, and even felled a couple of white oak trees, the chain 'peared to give up and lay still—'cept that it was trembling like a person with the ague.

And you better b'lieve all hands stood back outer the way, looking on with all the looks they had, for you *know*, Stranger, it must of been sumpin' mighty onnatural that would make cold iron carry on that away.

Well, after a spell, Tony come on back outer the woods, with the sweat jest a running off'n him.

"Thar now, *that's* fixed!" he says, kinder panting like.

And not a one of the hands dast to ask him *what* was fixed, for they knowed dog-goned well it must of been sumpin' turrible strange that would draw the sweat on Tony Beaver.

Tony looks around at 'em all, and he says, "One end of that chain's hitched to the wheels of time, and the t'other's hitched to them beasts—and *now* I'll have time going to suit me!"

And with that he spits on his hands and ketched aholt of his rawhide whip, that's got a lash to it pretty nigh half a mile long, and he swirls it out and cracks it, *Pough!* And them oxen, they bowed their heads and heaved into the yoke. And they heaved, *and they heaved*—but nuthing didn't happen.

"Yer *can't* do it, Tony! It's ergin reason!" old Brother Mutters sings out.

"Man! I'm *done* with reason!" Tony hollers back at him. And this time Big Henry wa'n't quick enough, and the blue-lightning look Tony shot at that preacher blowed him clean off'n the ground, and landed him down in a bresh pile a right smart piece away.

And Tony he cracks his whip ergin, and hollers "Yer-r—*rup!*" at the team. The crack of that whip was like a thunderclap in cl'ar weather, and that holler of Tony's went bounding on down Eel River, chipping the rocks off from side to side, till it jest natcherly bounced out in the levels at the fur end. And *Great Day in the Morning!* Them beasts went for'ards, and the *wheels of time commenced to turn!*

Well, *sirs!* When that happened, Stranger, they say it was like the whole world had busted loose from her breaks, and it made the stoutest hand thar reel like he had the blind staggers—all, that is, 'cept Tony. It ketched ole Brother Mutters in the

stomick, and he fell over acrost a stump, and commenced to give up his victuals.

"Whoop-*ee!* I got her going!" Tony sings out. "By the breath of the gray rocks! I got time going to suit me now!"

But hold and below! It wa'n't more'n the shake of a lamb's tail 'fore Tony seen he'd slipped up bad. Dogged if he hadn't them beasts headed wrong, and what do you reckon! 'Stead of pulling down the tomorrow he was after, he commenced fetching up yesterday, and the day before, and then d'rectly it was last week, and in a nother pair of seconds it was last month itself! Well, sirs! that was jest a little more'n the hands could stand, and they all busts out hollering at Tony to quit.

Stranger, did you ever see the past fetched back into the present?

Well, I ain't neither, and I ain't craving to. You see like it is—we looks down the past through a kind of a haze, like them pretty blue mists you'll see hanging over the mountains in Indian summer weather, and everything looks mighty meller and nice through it. But when Tony set time to vomiting up them yesterdays that way, they come up into the cold light of the present all mother-naked as you might say, and it was a *turrible* sight to see 'em. Big Henry seen hisself drunk last month, and while he'd looked back on it as a kinder glorious *e*vent, when the world was all lit up, and him the biggest Mister Man in it, it didn't look that away now. When he seen that past of his'n laid right out thar in the present, he knowed that was one time he'd jest natcherly been a fool for want of sense. And the t'other fellers seen things too that made 'em all swaller powerful hard.

Every feller seen his own past, but couldn't see the t'other feller's; so didn't nobody know what it was ole Brother Mutters seen, but whatsoever it was, it sunt him off in a long explanation to the Lord.

Well, Tony he seen right off he'd made a big mistake, so he drawed them beasts to a halt, and then he had 'em to back, back, and he run all them yesterdays and last weeks down into place ergin, very keerful like. They tell me the hands could hear them past days falling back down the skidways of time, *Plup! Plup! Plup!* to wait thar for Jedgment Day. They say as how it was a mighty strange and awesome kind of a sound—and I reckon it must of been, and not a sound that any common person would crave to hear.

Well, Tony he seen the trouble was he had them beasts headed towards the east, and course they was pulling up the west, which was whar all them yesterdays had went. So he turned 'em round westward; and this time when he cracked his whip, and hollered at 'em, it wa'n't but a minute 'fore they fetched into view jest the prettiest little tomorrow a person ever did see. But it was so all-fired skeery, it was nigh impossible to hold it. It wouldn't more'n peep over the edge of today, when, whoop-*ee!* it'd run back ergin into its hole like a ground hog what had seen its shadder. Time and ergin them beasts fetched that tomorrow down, and time and ergin, strain as they would,

it slipped erway from 'em. So in the end Tony seen he'd have to figger out a nother way of ketching it. And he knowed, too, he'd have to hurry, for by now it was right late in the day, and it wouldn't be so very long 'fore that tomorrow would be swinging into place at its natcheral time—and course that wouldn't do that little feller no good at all.

So Tony he studied a spell, and then he had the hands to git to work and sew a whole parcel of feed-bags together. And when they had a big lot of 'em fixed, and all spread out on the ground, Tony smeared 'em over right thick with tar, and then he went on back to his team.

This time he didn't crack his whip or holler at 'em; he jest whispered sumpin' right easy in the year of one of 'em. What that word was *I* don't know, Stranger, and I never seen a hand that knowed. All I know is that the minute he'd said it, and jumped back outer the way, them powerful beasts give sech a heave ergin the yoke, that they jest fa'rly fetched that tomorrow down with sech a run and a jump, that it bounded out head over heels, and landed down right spang in the middle of all them tarred bags—and *thar it stuck!* The tar it helt it, and when the team was drawed back by the turrible pull of time at the t'other end, that tomorrow it busted loose from the string of t'other days, and was left laying out thar flat in broad daylight.

Well, *sirs!* it was the fust time in all of they lives that any of them hands had ever seen a tomorrow laid out along side of a today, and they cert'nly was carried away by the sight. They jest natcherly had to hold they eyes in place, or they'd of popped right outer they heads and down into all that tar like a row of buttons. They looked, and they looked, and it's the truth they couldn't find nuthing 'cept cuss words to say erbout it.

Don't ask *me* what the dog-goned thing looked like, for I jest don't know, and you kin easy see I ain't no hand to make a tale up and pass it off for truth.

Well, after all hands had jest erbout cussed theyselves dry over it, Tony had 'em to ketch aholt of them bags and tote the tomorrow up Flint Holler. Thar they spread it out in front of the little boy's cabin. Tony he went inside and fetched the youngun out in his arms, and the minute he laid eyes on it, his face all broke into a laugh. "It's tomorrow!" he says.

It beats me how that kid knowed right off it was tomorrow, for it's the truth, Stranger, *I* wouldn't know tomorrow from last week—no, sir, I wouldn't, not even if you was to lay 'em out right side by side But course you know children is different.

"It's tomorrow!" the little feller says, "and *now* I'll be all right!" And with that he reaches his arm round Tony's neck right tight, and snuggles his head erginst him. "I knowed *you* could do it, buddy!" he says.

So Tony he knowed he'd been right in picking the onreasonable way.

III

Well now, Stranger, you mought think after all that big to-do, they could of had some rest up Eel River;

but you got to recollect that when any feller's so high-handed as to pull a tomorrow outer place like that, they's mighty apt to see trouble 'fore all's over; and I tell you, it wa'n't but jest a little bit 'fore all that crew run up erginst jest about the worst piece of trouble a person ever did see.

But not knowing what they was heading for, they lef' that tomorrow laying up thar in the holler for the little feller to git well on, and made for camp as onconsarned as you please.

Tony he went off in the woods ergin, and d'rectly that thar log chain commenced to squirm and jump erbout mighty oneasy like. And then all to oncet from 'way off somewheres, they heard Tony holler, "*Look out! Look out!*" And Great Day! That chain come a-lashing, and a-t'aring outer the woods like a blacksnake racer—and you hear me, all them hands side-stepped outer its way in a hurry. Well then, Tony come on back, and he says, "*Now* we'll knock off and call it a day."

So all hands tumbled into the bunkhouse early, and was snoring along jest as pretty and nice as you please, when late in the night, ole Brother Moses Mutters sets up a turrible lamentation, groaning and moaning.

"What in the *Heaven's* the matter with *you!* Air you tuck in the stumick ergin?" Big Henry hollers at him, mighty mad at being waked up. Only it wa'n't *Heavens* Big Henry said, and he didn't use sech a genteel word as stumick neither, for he's a kind of a rough hand, and'll lay his tongue to any word he pleases, and be jest as apt as not to come right out and call a bull a bull, 'stead of a 'gentleman cow,' like any person what's been raised right knows it ought to be called.

"Big Henry," says ole Brother Mutters, looking mighty wild and solemn with his hair all tousled up on end, and nuthing but his shirt on, "Big Henry, git up from thar, and make ready to die—for the end of the world is coming at sun-up!" And with that the ole feller busts out with a turrible howl, and flops down on his knees. "Lord, I never done it," he says. "It was all Tony Beaver's doing! Lord, this is me—Moses Mutters speaking. Do pray take notice *I* didn't have no hand in it, it was that crazy Tony Beaver—"

"*Quit that!*" Big Henry hollers at him, jumping outer his bunk, and jerking the preacher up standing. "You quit telling the Lord tales on Tony Beaver, or I'll jest natcherly bust your head off," he says. "Now then stand up on your two hoofs, and tell the fellers what's the trouble."

All hands was awake by now, sitting up in the bunks, kinder blinking in the lantern light.

Brother Mutters had to ketch his breath, and swaller some, 'fore he could git his words out, Big Henry'd jerked him up so sudden; but he layed it all out plain enough onct he got his wind.

"Don't you all know we're aheading for tomorrow jest as fast as the world kin travel—and *there ain't no tomorrow thar*," he says.

The fellers all stiffened up mighty pale at that, and commenced to cuss to theyselves.

"Well I reckon there's a plenty more tomorrows—Tony he only tuck one," Big Henry says.

"*Yes!* He only tuck one!" the preacher hollers out. "But he tuck the one we *got to have!* O my Lord! Tony Beaver's made a hole in the roadbed of time, and we're a-heading straight for it!"

One of the hands rips out a powerful cuss word at that. "What'll happen when we hit the hole?" he says.

"She'll *drap*—the world'll drap right through it," Brother Mutters groans. "She'll either drap *away* from the sun, and all flesh will be froze to death; or she'll drap span into it, and all be burnt alive."

Well, sirs! At that all hands bust outer the bunk-house, like logs busting over a dam, and made for whar Tony was laying out in the moonlight, with his head on a gray rock.

"Git up from thar, Tony Beaver!" they hollers at him. "Git up 'fore the world draps!"

And then, turrible skeered, and all clammering at once, they layed out to him what they was all heading for.

"Aw, it'll be all right," Tony says, gitting up and shaking hisself more like some kind of a wild varmint than a human.

But the hands kinder sensed that for all his bluff he was right oneasy hisself, and that skeered 'em worse'n ever. Some of the fellers was all for rustling round, and trying to run that thar tomorrow back into place ergin 'fore it was too late. But Tony he wouldn't hear to that.

"Any hand that wants kin take that thar log chain back in the bresh, and hitch it to what I had it hitched to," he says; "but you hear *my* horn, I'd as soon have the world drap, as to fool with *that* place ergin!"

And recollecting how that chain had carried on, there wa'n't a hand thar craved to take the job.

"More'n that," Tony says, "that thar tomorrow's jest natcherly ruined anyhow, and you couldn't run it back into place ergin, all stuck up with tar like it is."

That 'peared to be sense, too, and it looked like there wa'n't a thing to do but jest set and wait for the world to drap.

Well, while they was all standing round waiting,—and a plenty of 'em was shaking like they had the buck ague,—the question come up, if the world was to drap, when would she do it! Some fellers 'lowed it'd be at midnight, and some ergin said it wouldn't be till daybreak. So thar they had it back and forth, and all got so hot, that Big Henry, and Jim Sulivan, that's Irish stock off'n Piney Ridge, even squared theyselves off to settle it with they fists. But the t'other fellers made 'em quit, for they said it'd look kinder ornery, and maybe give the Eel River crew a bad name, if they was to go into Kingdom Come fighting. That ca'med the Sulivan feller, but Big Henry said he'd as leave go thar fighting, as to go any other way. But erbout then some feller had the sense to look at the time.

"Here!" he sings out, "it's after midnight now, and she ain't drapped yit!"

"Then it'll be at sun-up!" ole Brother Mutters busts out. "She'll drap at daybreak! O Lord! *I* never done it! Lord this is Moses Mutters speaking. It was all Tony's—"

"Didn't I tell you to *quit that?*" Big Henry hollers at him, dancing up to the preacher, and looking powerful dangerous. "You shet up now and forever!" he says, "and more'n that, when we git across into the next world, if I ketch you up at the Golden Gate tattling out tales on Tony Beaver to Saint Peter, I'll jest natcherly bust you down to the t'other place," he says. Only Big Henry laid his tongue to a stronger word than "the t'other place."

Well, that dried up Brother Mutters on that head; for skeered as he was of what was coming, he was more skeered of what was right beside him. So he went off on another trail, and commenced telling the Lord how it looked like a shame to have the world come to a end in sech nice fall weather. And that was kinder funny too, for heretofore, the ole feller was allus preaching erbout the world being a desert drear. But he tuned up different now.

"O Lord," he blubbers, "don't let the world drap in fall weather when the ground smells so good, and the trees is all colored up nice. If she's bound to drap, let it come in a cold spell in the winter, or along late in March, when the traveling's bad, and the mud up to the hubs of the wheels; but *do pray* don't let her drap *now!*"

That set all the hands off sniffling and wiping they sleeves acrost they noses. For if ole Brother Moses had to tell the Lord how pretty it was in fall weather, he didn't have to tell none of *them.* They jest natcherly knowed for theyselves how the ridges looked, all colored up red and yeller, with the sun shining over 'em, and the squirrels barking up every holler on frosty mornings. "Now jest look what Tony Beaver's done!" they says sniffling and using they sleeves: "gone and ruined the world on a pretty day in October!"

Tony he told 'em to shet up all that foolishness, and he jest kep' a-standing up thar on his gray rock with his arms folded, and trying to make out like he didn't keer nuthing for nobody. But Big Henry noticed he was staring mighty hard at a pint off erginst the sky. "What's that you're a-looking at, Tony?" he asks him.

"Well," Tony says, "I been noticing these last mornings, that the sun strikes right betwixt them two big pines jest as it tops the ridge. If she don't strike thar this morning, then we'll know that the world is kinder out of plumb."

Well, *sirs!* That sunt the hands limp, for it looked like Tony hisself wa'n't so sure how things was going to be. And when Tony Beaver's oneasy, you better b'lieve it's time for any common person to be skeered outer his very gizzards. All the fellers bust loose into a turrible cussing and praying and clammering, like a gang of wild geese what had lost they leader.

By now it was drawing on towards dawn, there was a pale glimmer in

the east, and them two pine trees stood up powerful black and strange-looking erginst the sky. All to onct Tony Beaver raised up his hand and says, "Listen!" mighty solemn.

Every feller quit cussing, and ketched his breath at that, and over in the woods they heard a little bird cheep, and another answered it back, and then another and another. Not singing yit, jest cl'aring they throats to tune up. And that was a turrible awesome sound, for every hand knowed it was the forerunner of dawn.

And Great Day in the Morning! Jest that minute a strange kind of a dampness come out all over the ground, like the earth itself had broke into a cold sweat. And while they was all a-staring down at that, and listening to the birds cheep, and knowing they was right on the edge of tomorrow, and *no tommorrow thar*—jest that minute the whole world commenced to tremble and to quiver, and to kind of squat down like a skittish horse what sees sumpin' turrible on in front.

"*She's drapping! She's drapping!*" Ole Brother Mutters screeches out, and fell over like he was dead.

The world give another kind of a long tremble, and then, *whoop-ee!* it give sech a powerful leap and a bound, that it knocked every feller thar right off'n his feet head over heels down on the ground—all, that is, 'cept Tony. For a pair of seconds it seemed like they kind of hung on the edge of sumpin', and then thar was another kick and a scramble, and after that the world settled down like it was over all right.

"She made it! She made it!" Tony busts loose. "By the breath of the gray rocks, she made it all right!"

Jest that minute the sun come up over the ridge, and hung right spang betwixt them two pines, and all the little birds tuck a big mouthful of song, and commenced to pour it out. The hands set up on the ground looking round kinder dazed; and thar was jest about the prettiest fall day a person ever *did* see, with the long blue shadders laying over the frost, and the mists smoking off'n the mountains that was all red and yeller and joyful.

"Tony," Big Henry says, gitting onto his feet weak like, "what happened?"

"Why you big *idgit*," Tony says looking him squar in the eyes, "don't you know this is a *Leap Year?* Do you reckon," he says, "I'd be sech a fool for want of sense, as to pull a tomorrow outer a year what couldn't leap the hole, and what had a extry day to spare anyhow?"

Big Henry looks at him for quite a spell, and then he says, "Well, I *will be dogged!*" kinder awe-struck.

Well, Stranger, you jest can't make *me* b'lieve Tony had it all figgered out as fine as that, for he ain't no kind of a forelooker, and if he wanted a tomorrow, he'd help hisself to it and never stop to think; and I b'lieve him happening to hit a leap year wa'n't nuthing in this world but his dog-goned luck. But it was all too much for ole Brother Mutters, and they laid *him* out for dead till nigh sundown.

THE GREY ANGEL

JOHN GALSWORTHY

Her predilection for things French came from childish recollections of schooldays in Paris and a hasty removal thence by her father during the revolution of '48; of later travels as a little maiden, by diligence, to Pau and the then undiscovered Pyrenees, to Montpellier, and a Nice as yet unspoiled. Unto her seventy-eighth year, her French accent had remained unruffled, her soul in love with French gloves and dresses; and her face had the pale, unwrinkled, slightly aquiline perfection of the French marquise type—it may, perhaps, be doubted whether any French marquise ever looked the part so perfectly.

How it came about that she had settled down in a southern French town, in the summer of 1914, only her roving spirit knew. She had been a widow ten years, which she had passed in the quest of perfection; all her life she had been haunted by that instinct, half-smothered in ministering to her husband, children, and establishments in London and the country. Now, in loneliness, the intrinsic independence of her soul was able to assert itself, and from hotel to hotel she had wandered in England, Wales, Switzerland, France, till she had found what seemingly arrested her. Was it the age of that oldest of Western cities, that little mother of Western civilisation, which captured her fancy? Or did a curious perversity turn her from more obvious abodes; or, again, was she kept there by the charm of a certain church which she would enter every day to steep herself in mellow darkness, the scent of incense, the drone of incantations, and quiet communion with a God higher indeed than she had been brought up to, high-church though she had always been? She had a pretty little apartment, where for very little—the bulk of her small wealth was habitually at the service of others—she could manage with one maid and no "fuss." She had some "nice" French friends there, too. But more probably it was simply the war which kept her, waiting, like so many other people, till it seemed worth while to move and re-establish herself. The immensity and wickedness of this strange event held her suspended, body and spirit, high up on the hill which had seen the ancient peoples, the Romans, Gauls, Saracens, and still looked out towards the flat Camargue. Here in her three rooms, with a little kitchen, the maid Augustine, a parrot, and the Paris *Daily Mail*, she dwelt marooned by a world event which stunned her. Not that she worried, exactly. The defeat of her country and France never entered her head. She only grieved quietly over the dreadful things that were being done, and every now and then would glow with admiration at the beautiful way the King and Queen were behaving. It was no good to "fuss," and one must make the best of things, as the "dear little Queen" was doing—

From a photograph by Doris Ulmann

John Galsworthy

for each Queen in turn, and she had seen three reign in her time, was always that to her. Her ancestors had been uprooted from their lands, their house burned, her pedigree diverted, in the Stuart wars; and a reverence for royalty was fastened in her blood.

Quite early in the business she had begun to knit, moving her slim fingers not too fast, gazing at the grey wool through glasses, rimless and invisible, perched on the bridge of her firm well-shaped nose, and now and then speaking to her parrot. The bird could say, "Scratch a poll, Poll," and "Hullo!"—those keys to the English language. The maid Augustine, having completed some small duty, would come and stand, her head on one side, gazing down with inquiring compassion in her young, clear-brown eyes. It seemed to her, straight and sturdy as a young tree, both wonderful and sad that *Madame* should be seventy-seven, and so frail—*Madame* who had no lines in her face and such beautiful grey hair; who had so strong a will-power, too, and knitted such soft comforters "*pour nos braves chers poilus.*" And suddenly she would say: "*Madame n'est pas fatiguée?*" And *Madame* would answer: "No. Speak English, Augustine—Polly will pick up your French!" And, reaching up a pale hand, she would set straight a stray fluff of the girl's dark-brown hair or improve the set of her fichu.

Those two got on extremely well, for though *Madame* was—oh! but very particular, she was always "*très gentille et toujours grande dame.*" And that love of from deep in the French soul promoted the girl's admiration for one whom she could see would in no circumstances lose her dignity. Besides, *Madame* was full of dainty household devices, and could not bear waste; and these, though exacting, were qualities which appealed to Augustine. With her French passion for "the family," she used to wonder how in days like these *Madame* could endure to be far away from her son and daughter and the grandchildren, whose photographs hung on the walls; and the long letters her mistress was always writing in a beautiful, fine hand, beginning, "My darling Sybil," "My darling Reggie," and ending always, "Your devoted mother," seemed to a warm and simple heart but meagre substitutes for flesh-and-blood realities. But, as *Madame* would inform her, they were so busy doing things for the dear soldiers, and working for the war; they could not come to her—that would never do. And to go to them would give so much trouble, when the railways were so wanted for the troops; and she had their lovely letters, which she kept—as Augustine observed—in a lavender-scented sachet, and frequently took out to read. Another point of sympathy between those two was their passion for military music and seeing soldiers pass. Augustine's brother and father were at the front, and *Madame's* dead brother had been a soldier in the Crimean War—"long before you were born, Augustine, when the French and English fought the Russians: I was in France then, too, a little girl, and we lived at Nice; the flowers were so lovely, you can't

think! And my poor brother was so cold in the siege of Sebastopol." Somehow, that time and that war were more real to her than this.

In December, when the hospitals were already full, her French friends took her to the one which they attended. She went in, her face very calm, with that curious inward composure which never deserted it, carrying in front of her a black silk bag, wherein she had concealed an astonishing collection of treasures for the poor men. A bottle of acidulated drops, packets of cigarettes, two of her own mufflers, a pocket set of draughts, some English riddles translated by herself into French (very curious), some ancient copies of an illustrated paper, boxes of chocolate, a ball of string to make "cats' cradles" (such an amusing game), her own packs of patience cards, some photograph frames, postcards of Arles, and, most singular, a kettle-holder. At the head of each bed she would sit down and rummage in the bag, speaking in her slow but quite good French, to explain the use of the acidulated drops, or to give a lesson in cats' cradles. And the *poilus* would listen with their polite, ironic patience, and be left smiling, curiously fascinated, as if they had been visited by a creature from another world. She would move on to other beds, quite unconscious of the effect she had produced on them and of their remarks: "*L'ange aux cheveux gris*" became her name within those walls. And the habit of filling that black silk bag and going there to distribute its contents soon grew to be with her a ruling passion which neither weather nor her own aches and pains, not inconsiderable, must interfere with. The things she brought became more marvellous every week. But, however much she carried coals to Newcastle, or tobacco pouches to those who did not smoke, or homeopathic globules to such as crunched up the whole bottleful for the sake of the sugar as soon as her back was turned, no one ever smiled now with anything but real pleasure at the sight of her calm and truly sweet smile and the scent of soap on her pale hands. "*Cher fils, je croyais que ceci vous donnerait un peu de plaisir. Voyez-vous comme c'est commode, n'est ce pas?*" Each newcomer to the wards was warned by his comrades that the angel with the grey hair was to be taken without a smile, exactly as if she were his grandmother.

In the walk to the hospital Augustine would accompany her, carrying the bag and a large peasant's umbrella to cover them both, for the winter was hard and snowy, and carriages cost money, which must now be kept entirely for the almost daily replenishment of the bag and other calls of war. The girl, to her chagrin, was always left in a safe place, for it would never do to take her in and put fancies into her head, or excite the dear soldiers with anything so taking. The visit over, they would set forth home, walking very slowly in the high narrow streets, Augustine pouting a little and shooting swift glances at anything in uniform, and *Madame* making firm her lips against a fatigue which sometimes almost overcame her before she could get

home and up the stairs. And the parrot would greet them indiscreetly with new phrases—"Keep smiling!" and "Kiss Augustine!" which he sometimes varied with "Kiss a poll, Poll!" or "Scratch Augustine!" to *Madame's* regret. Tea would revive her, and then she would knit, for as time went on and the war seemed to get farther from that end which, in common with so many, she had expected before now, it seemed dreadful not to be always doing something to help the poor dear soldiers; and for dinner, to Augustine's horror, she now had nothing but soup, or an egg beaten up with milk and brandy. It saved time and expense—she was sure people ate too much; and afterward she would read the *Daily Mail*, often putting it down to sigh, and press her lips together, and think, "One must look on the bright side of things," and wonder a little where it was. And Augustine, finishing her work in the tiny kitchen, would sigh too, and think of red trousers and peaked caps, not yet out of date in that southern region, and of her own heart saying "Kiss Augustine!" and she would peer out between the shutters at the stars sparkling over the Camargue, or look down where the ground fell away beyond an old wall, and nobody walked in the winter night; and muse on her nineteenth birthday coming, and sigh with the thought that she would be old before anyone had loved her; and of how *Madame* was looking "*très fatiguée.*"

Indeed, *Madame* was "*très fatiguée*" in these days. The world's vitality and her own were at January ebb. But to think of oneself was impossible; it would be all right presently, and one must not fuss, or mention in one's letters to the dear children that one felt poorly. As for a doctor—that would be sinful waste, and besides, what use were they except to tell you what you knew? And she was terribly vexed when Augustine found her in a faint one morning, and she found Augustine in tears, with her hair all over her face. She rated the girl soundly for making such a fuss over "a little thing like that," and with extremely trembling fingers pushed the brown hair back and told her to wash her face, while the parrot said reflectively, "Scratch a poll—Hullo!" The girl, who had seen her own grandmother die not long before, and remembered how "*fatiguée*" she had been during her last days, was frightened. Coming back after washing her face, she found her mistress writing on a number of little envelopes the same words: "*En bonne Amitié.*"

"Take this hundred-franc note, Augustine, and get it changed into single francs—the ironmonger will do it if you say it's for me. I am going to take a rest. I shan't buy anything for the bag for a whole week. I shall take francs instead."

"Oh, *Madame!* You must not go out: *vous êtes trop fatiguée.*"

"Nonsense! How do you suppose our dear little Queen in England would get on with all she has to do, if she were to give in like that? We must none of us give up in these days. Help me to put on my things; I am going to church."

"Oh, *Madame!* Must you go to church? It is not your kind of church. You do not pray there, do you?"

"Of course I pray there. I am very fond of the dear old church. God is in every church, Augustine; you ought to know that at your age."

"But *Madame* has her own religion?"

"Don't be silly. What does that matter? Help me into my cloth coat —not the fur, it's too heavy—and then go and get that money changed."

"But *Madame* should see a doctor. If *Madame* faints again I shall die with fright. *Madame* has no color—but no color at all; it must be that there is something wrong."

Madame rose, and taking the girl's ear between thumb and finger pinched it gently.

"You are a very silly girl. What would our soldiers do if all the nurses were like you?"

Reaching the church she sat down gladly, turning her face up toward her favorite picture, a Virgin standing with her Baby in her arms. It was only faintly colored now; but there were those who said that an Arlésienne must have sat for it. Why it pleased her so she never quite knew, unless by its cool, unrestored devotion, and the faint smiling in the eyes. Religion with her was strange yet very real. She was not clever, and never even began to try and understand what she believed. If she tried to be good she would go to God—wherever God might be; and rarely did she forget to try to be good. Sitting there she thought, or rather prayed: "Let me forget that I have a body, and remember the poor soldiers."

She shivered. It struck cold that morning in the church—the wind bitter from the north-east; some women in black were kneeling, and four candles burned in the gloom of a side aisle—thin, steady little spires of gold. There was no sound at all. A smile came on her lips. She was remembering all those young faces in the wards, the faces, too, of her own children far away, the faces of all she loved; and all the poor souls on land and sea, fighting and working and dying. Her lips moved in prayer: "O God, who makes the birds sing and the stars shine and gives us little children, strengthen my heart so that I may forget my own aches and think of those of other people."

On reaching home again she took gelsemium, her favourite remedy against that shivering, which would keep coming; then, covering herself with her fur coat, she lay down. Augustine, returning with the hundred single francs, placed them noiselessly beside the little pile of envelopes, and, after looking at the motionless face of her mistress, withdrew. Two tears came out of those closed eyes and clung on the pale cheeks below. The seeming sleeper was thinking of her children, away over there in England, her children and their children. Almost unbearably she was longing for a sight of them, recalling each face, voice, different way they had of saying "Mother darling," or "Granny, look what I've got!" and thinking that if only the war would end she would pack at once and go to them—that is, if they would not come to her for a nice long holiday in this beautiful place. She thought

of spring and how lovely it would be to see the trees come out again, and almond blossom against a blue sky. The war seemed so long, and winter too. But she must not complain; others had much greater sorrows—the poor widowed women kneeling in the church; the poor boys freezing in the trenches. God in His great mercy would not allow it to last much longer! It would not be like Him! Her eyes rested gloatingly on the piles of francs and envelopes. How could she reduce still further her personal expenditure? It was so dreadful to spend on oneself—an old woman like her. Doctor, indeed! If Augustine fussed any more she would send her away and do for herself! And the parrot, leaving his cage, which he could always do, perched just behind her and said: "Hullo! Kiss me, too!"

That afternoon in the hospital everyone noticed what a beautiful color she had. "*L'ange aux cheveux gris*" had never been more popular.

She had not meant to give all the francs that day, but she saw how pleased they were, and so the whole ninety-seven had their franc each. The three over would buy Augustine a little brooch to make up to the silly child for her fright in the morning. The buying of this brooch took a long time at the jeweller's, and she had only just fixed on an amethyst before feeling deadly ill with a dreadful pain through her lungs. She went out with her tiny package quickly, not wanting any fuss, and began to mount toward home. She had only three hundred yards to go, and with each step said to herself: "Nonsense! What would the Queen think of you? Remember the poor soldiers with only one leg! You have got both your legs! And the poor men who walk from the battlefield with bullets through the lungs. What is your pain to theirs?" But the pain, like none she had ever felt—having sharp knife edges—kept passing through and through her; her legs had no strength at all, seeming to move simply because her will said: "If you don't, I'll leave you behind. So there!" She felt as if perspiration were flowing down, yet her face was dry as a dead leaf when she put up her hand to it. Her brain stammered, came to a sudden standstill. Her eyes searched painfully each grey-shuttered window for her own house, though she knew quite well that she had not reached it yet. From sheer pain she stood still, a wry smile on her lips, thinking how Polly would say: "Keep smiling!" Then she moved on, holding out her hand, as if to pull on some imaginary rope. So, foot by foot, she crept to her door. A peculiar floating sensation had come over her. The pain ceased, and—as if she had passed through no doors, mounted no stairs—she was up in her room, lying on her sofa, conscious that she was not in control of her thoughts, and that Augustine must be thinking her ridiculous. Making a great effort, she said:

"I forbid you to send for a doctor, Augustine. I shall be all right in a day or two. And you must put on this little brooch—I bought it for you. The war will be over to-morrow and then we will all go and have tea together in a wood. Granny will come to you, my darlings."

And when the terrified girl had rushed out she thought: "There now! I shall get up and do for myself." The doctor found her half-dressed, trying to feed a perch in the empty cage with a spoon, while the parrot sat on the mantelpiece, with his head on one side.

When she had been properly undressed and made to lie down on the sofa, for she would not go to bed and they dared not oppose her, the doctor made his diagnosis. It was that of double pneumonia, which declares for life or death in forty-eight hours. At her age a desperate case. Her children must be wired to at once. She had sunk back, seemingly unconscious; and Augustine slipped out the lavender sachet where the letters were kept and gave it to the doctor. When he had left the room to extract addresses and send those telegrams, the girl sat down by the foot of the couch, staring at that motionless form, with tears running down her broad cheeks. For many minutes neither of them stirred, and the only sound was the restless stropping of the parrot's beak against a wire of his cage. Then the lips moved, and the girl bent forward. A whispering came forth:

"Mind, Augustine—no one is to tell my children—I can't have them disturbed—over a little thing—like this—and in my purse you'll find another—hundred-franc note. I shall want some more francs for the day after to-morrow. Be a good girl and don't fuss. Give me my gelsemium and my prayer-book. And go to bed just as usual—we must all—keep smiling—like the dear soldiers——"

The whispering ceased; then began again in delirious incoherence. The girl sat trembling, covering her ears from those uncanny sounds. She could not follow—with her little English—the swerving, intricate flights of that old spirit mazed by fever—the memories released, the longings disclosed, the half-uttered prayers, the little half-conscious efforts to regain form and dignity. She could only pray to the Virgin. When relieved by the daughter of *Madame's* French friend, who spoke good English, she murmured: "*Oh! Mademoiselle, Madame est très, très fatiguée—la pauvre tête—faut-il enlever les cheveux? Elle fait ça toujours pour elle-même.*" To the girl it seemed sacrilege to take off that crown of fine grey hair. Yet, when the old face was covered only by the thin white hair of nature, dignity still surmounted the wandering talk and the moaning from the parched lips, which smiled and pouted, as if remembering the maxims of the parrot. So the night passed. Once her spirit seemed to recover its coherence, and she was heard to whisper: "God has given me this so that I may know what the poor soldiers suffer. Oh! they've forgotten to cover Polly's cage." But high fever soon passes from the very old; and early morning brought a deathlike exhaustion, with utter silence, save for the licking of the flames at the olive-wood logs, and the sound as they slipped or settled down, calcined. The firelight crept fantastically about the walls covered with tapestry of French-grey silk, crept round the screen-head of the couch, and exhibited the pallor of

that mask-like face, which covered such tenuous threads of life. Augustine, who had come on guard when the fever died away, sat in the armchair before those flames, trying to watch, but dropping off into the healthy sleep of youth. And out in the clear, hard shivering Southern cold, the old clocks chimed the hours into the winter dark, where the old town brooded above plain and river under the morning stars. The girl dreamed—dreamed of a sweetheart under the acacias by her home, of his pinning their white flowers into her hair; and woke with a little laugh. Light was already coming through the shutter chinks, the fire was but red embers and white ash. She gathered it stealthily together, put on fresh logs, and stole over to the couch. How white! how still! Dead? She jerked her hands up to her full breast, and a cry mounted to her throat. The eyes opened. The lips parted, as if to smile; the voice whispered: "Don't be silly!" The girl's cry changed into a little sob, and bending down she put her lips to the hand outside the quilt. It moved faintly, the lips whispered: "The emerald ring is for you, Augustine. Is it morning? Uncover Polly's cage and open his door."

A telegram had come. Her son and daughter would arrive next morning early. They waited for a moment of consciousness to tell her; but the day went by, and it did not come. She was sinking fast; her only movements were a tiny compression now and then of the lips, a half-opening of the eyes, and once a smile when the parrot spoke. The rally came at eight o'clock. *Mademoiselle* was sitting by the couch when the voice came fairly strong: "Give my love to my dear soldiers, and take them their francs out of my purse, please. Augustine, take care of Polly. I want to see if the emerald ring fits you. Take it off, please. There, you see, it does. That's very nice. Your sweetheart will like that when you have one. What do you say, *Mademoiselle?* My son and daughter are coming? All that way?" The lips smiled, tears forced their way into her eyes. "My darlings! How good of them! Oh! what a cold journey they'll have! Get my room ready, Augustine, with a good fire! What are you crying for? Remember what Polly says: 'Keep smiling!' "

She did not seem anxious as to whether she would live to see her children. Her smile moved *Mademoiselle* to whisper: "*Elle a la sourire divine.*"

"*Ah! Mademoiselle, elle pense toujours aux autres.*" And the girl's tears dropped on the emerald ring.

The long night fell—would she wake again? Both watched, ready at the faintest movement to administer oxygen and brandy. She was still breathing when at six o'clock they heard the express come in and presently the carriage stop before the house. *Mademoiselle* stole down to let them in.

Still in their traveling coats, her son and daughter knelt down beside the couch, watching in the dim candle-light for a sign and cherishing her cold hands. Daylight came; they put the shutters back and blew out the candles. Augustine, huddled in

the far corner, cried gently to herself. *Mademoiselle* had withdrawn. The two still knelt, tears running down their cheeks. The least twitching of just-opened lips showed that she breathed. A tiny sigh escaped; her eyelids fluttered. The son, leaning forward, said:

"Sweetheart, we're here."

The eyes opened then; something more than a simple human spirit seemed to look through—the lips parted. They bent to catch the sound.

"My darlings—don't cry; smile!" The eyes closed. A smile, so touching that it rent the heart, flickered and went out. Breath had ceased to pass the lips.

In silence the French girl's sobbing rose; the parrot stirred in his still-covered cage. And the son and daughter knelt, pressing their faces against the couch.

POETRY

THE MASTER[1]

Lincoln as seen, presumably, by one of his contemporaries, shortly after the Civil War

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

A flying word from here and there
Had sown the name at which we sneered,
But soon the name was everywhere,
To be reviled and then revered:
A presence to be loved and feared,
We cannot hide it, or deny
That we, the gentlemen who jeered,
May be forgotten by and by.

He came when days were perilous
And hearts of men were sore beguiled;
And having made his note of us,
He pondered and was reconciled.
Was ever master yet so mild
As he, and so untamable?
We doubted, even when he smiled,
Not knowing what he knew so well.

He knew that undeceiving fate
Would shame us whom he served unsought;
He knew that he must wince and wait—
The jest of those for whom he fought;
He knew devoutly what he thought
Of us and of our ridicule;
He knew that we must all be taught
Like little children in a school.

We gave a glamour to the task
That he encountered and saw through,
But little of us did he ask,
And little did we ever do.
And what appears if we review
The season when we railed and chaffed?
It is the face of one who knew
That we were learning while we laughed.

The face that in our vision feels
Again the venom that we flung,
Transfigured to the world reveals
The vigilance to which we clung.
Shrewd, hallowed, harassed, and among
The mysteries that are untold,
The face we see was never young,
Nor could it ever have been old.

For he, to whom we have applied
Our shopman's test of age and worth,
Was elemental when he died,
As he was ancient at his birth:
The saddest among kings of earth,
Bowed with a galling crown, this man
Met rancor with a cryptic mirth,
Laconic—and Olympian.

The love, the grandeur, and the fame
Are bounded by the world alone;
The calm, the smouldering, and the flame
Of awful patience were his own:
With him they are forever flown
Past all our fond self-shadowings,
Wherewith we cumber the Unknown
As with inept Icarian wings.

For we were not as other men:
'Twas ours to soar and his to see.
But we are coming down again,
And we shall come down pleasantly;

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, from *The Town down the River* by E. A. Robinson.

Nor shall we longer disagree
On what it is to be sublime,
But flourish in our perigee
And have one Titan at a time.

CLIFF KLINGENHAGEN

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

Cliff Klingenhagen had me in to dine
With him one day; and after soup and meat,
And all the other things there were to eat,
Cliff took two glasses and filled one with wine
And one with wormwood. Then, without a sign
For me to choose at all, he took the draught
Of bitterness himself, and lightly quaffed
It off, and said the other one was mine.

And when I asked him what the deuce he meant
By doing that, he only looked at me
And smiled, and said it was a way of his
And though I know the fellow, I have spent
Long time a-wondering when I shall be
As happy as Cliff Klingenhagen is.

RICHARD CORY

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich—yes, richer than a king,
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

OLD SUSAN

WALTER DE LA MARE

When Susan's work was done, she'd sit
With one fat guttering candle lit,
And window opened wide to win
The sweet night air to enter in;
There, with a thumb to keep her place,
She'd read, with stern and wrinkled face.
Her mild eyes gliding very slow
Across the letters to and fro,
While wagged the guttering candle flame
In the wind that through the window came.

And sometimes in the silence she
Would mumble a sentence audibly,
Or shake her head as if to say,
"You silly souls, to act this way!"
And never a sound from night I'd hear,
Unless some far-off cock crowed clear;
Or her old shuffling thumb should turn
Another page; and rapt and stern,
Through her great glasses bent on me
She'd glance into reality;
And shake her round old silvery head,
With—"You!—I thought you was in bed!"—
Only to tilt her book again,
And rooted in Romance remain.

MISS LOO

WALTER DE LA MARE

When thin-strewn memory I look through,
I see most clearly poor Miss Loo,
Her tabby cat, her cage of birds,
Her nose, her hair, her muffled words,
And how she would open her green eyes,
As if in some immense surprise,
Whenever as we sat at tea
She made some small remark to me.

'Tis always drowsy summer when
From out the past she comes again;
The westering sunshine in a pool
Floats in her parlour still and cool;
While the slim bird its lean wires shakes,
As into piercing song it breaks;
Till Peter's pale-green eyes ajar
Dream, wake; wake, dream, in one brief bar.
And I am sitting, dull and shy,
And she with gaze of vacancy,
And large hands folded on the tray,
Musing the afternoon away;
Her satin bosom heaving slow
With sighs that softly ebb and flow.
And her plain face in such dismay,
It seems unkind to look her way:
Until all cheerful back will come
Her gentle gleaming spirit home;
And one would think that poor Miss Loo
Asked nothing else, if she had you.

PORTRAIT OF AN OLD WOMAN

ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE

She limps with halting painful pace,
  Stops, wavers, and creeps on again;
Peers up with dim and questioning face
  Void of desire or doubt or pain.

Her cheeks hang gray in waxen folds
  Wherein there stirs no blood at all.
A hand like bundled cornstalks holds
  The tatters of a faded shawl.

Where was a breast, sunk bones she clasps;
  A knot jerks where were woman-hips;
A ropy throat sends writhing gasps
  Up to the tight line of her lips.

Here strong the city's pomp is poured. . . .
  She stands, unhuman, bleak, aghast:
An empty temple of the Lord
  From which the jocund Lord has passed.

He has builded him another house,
Whenceforth his flame, renewed and bright,
Shines stark upon these weathered brows
Abandoned to the final night.

BESSIE BOBTAIL

JAMES STEPHENS

As down the street she wambled slow,
She had not got a place to go:
She had not got a place to fall
And rest herself—no place at all.
She stumped along and wagged her pate
And said a thing was desperate.

Her face was screwed and wrinkled tight
Just like a nut—and, left and right,
On either side she wagged her head
And said a thing; and what she said
Was desperate as any word
That ever yet a person heard.

I walked behind her for a while
And watched the people nudge and smile.
But ever as she went she said,
As left and right she swung her head,
—"Oh, God He knows," and "God He knows:"
And surely God Almighty knows.

THE VEIL

WALTER DE LA MARE

I think and think: yet still I fail—
Why must this lady wear a veil?
Why thus elect to mask her face
Beneath that dainty web of lace?
The tip of a small nose I see,
And two red lips, set curiously
Like twin-born berries on one stem,
And yet, she has netted even them.
Her eyes, 'tis plain, survey with ease
Whate'er to glance upon they please.
Yet, whether hazel, gray, or blue,
Or that even lovelier lilac hue,
I cannot guess: why—why deny
Such beauty to the passer-by?
Out of a bush a nightingale
May expound his song; from 'neath that veil
A happy mouth no doubt can make
English sound sweeter for its sake.
But then, why muffle in like this
What every blossomy wind would kiss?
Why in that little night disguise
A daybreak face, those starry eyes?

ANNE RUTLEDGE

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

Out of me unworthy and unknown
The vibrations of deathless music;
"With malice toward none, with charity for all."
Out of me the forgiveness of millions toward millions,
And the beneficent face of a nation
Shining with justice and truth.
I am Anne Rutledge who sleep beneath these weeds,
Beloved in life of Abraham Lincoln,
Wedded to him, not through union,
But through separation.
Bloom forever, O Republic,
From the dust of my bosom!

FIDDLER JONES

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

The earth keeps some vibration going
There in your heart, and that is you.
And if the people find you can fiddle,
Why, fiddle you must, for all your life.

James Stephens

What do you see, a harvest of clover?
Or a meadow to walk through to the river?
The wind's in the corn; you rub your hands
For beeves hereafter ready for market;
Or else you hear the rustle of skirts
Like the girls when dancing at Little Grove.
To Cooney Potter a pillar of dust
Or whirling leaves meant ruinous drouth;
They looked to me like Red-Head Sammy
Stepping it off, to "Toor-a-Loor."
How could I till my forty acres
Not to speak of getting more,
With a medley of horns, bassoons and piccolos
Stirred in my brain by crows and robins
And the creak of a wind-mill—only these?
And I never started to plow in my life
That some one did not stop in the road
And take me away to a dance or picnic.
I ended up with forty acres;
I ended up with a broken fiddle—
And a broken laugh, and a thousand memories,
And not a single regret.

REUBEN BRIGHT

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

Because he was a butcher and thereby
Did earn an honest living (and did right),
I would not have you think that Reuben Bright
Was any more a brute than you or I;
For when they told him that his wife must die,
He stared at them, and shook with grief and fright,
And cried like a great baby half that night,
And made the women cry to see him cry.

And after she was dead, and he had paid
The singers and the sexton and the rest,
He packed a lot of things that she had made
Most mournfully away in an old chest
Of hers, and put some chopped-up cedar boughs
In with them, and tore down the slaughter house.

PETIT, THE POET

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

Seeds in a dry pod, tick, tick, tick,
Tick, tick, tick, like mites in a quarrel—
Faint iambics that the full breeze wakens—
But the pine tree makes a symphony thereof.
Triolets, villanelles, rondels, rondeaus,
Ballades by the score with the same old thought:
The snows and the roses of yesterday are vanished;
And what is love but a rose that fades?
Life all around me here in the village:
Tragedy, comedy, valor and truth,

Courage, constancy, heroism, failure—
All in the loom, and, oh, what patterns!
Woodlands, meadows, streams and rivers—
Blind to all of it all my life long.
Triolets, villanelles, rondels, rondeaus,
Seeds in a dry pod, tick, tick, tick,
Tick, tick, tick, what little iambics,
While Homer and Whitman roared in the pines!

PATTERNS

AMY LOWELL

I walk down the garden paths,
And all the daffodils
Are blowing, and the bright blue squills.
I walk down the patterned garden paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown.
With my powdered hair and jewelled fan,
I too am a rare
Pattern. As I wander down
The garden paths.

My dress is richly figured,
And the train
Makes a pink and silver stain
On the gravel, and the thrift
Of the borders.
Just a plate of current fashion,
Tripping by in high-heeled, ribboned shoes.
Not a softness anywhere about me,
Only whale-bone and brocade.
And I sink on a seat in the shade
Of a lime tree. For my passion
Wars against the stiff brocade.
The daffodils and squills
Flutter in the breeze
As they please.
And I weep;
For the lime tree is in blossom
And one small flower has dropped upon my bosom.

And the plashing of waterdrops
In the marble fountain
Comes down the garden paths.
The dripping never stops.
Underneath my stiffened gown
Is the softness of a woman bathing in a marble basin,
A basin in the midst of hedges grown
So thick, she cannot see her lover hiding,
But she guesses he is near,
And the sliding of the water
Seems the stroking of a dear
Hand upon her.
What is Summer in a fine brocaded gown!
I should like to see it lying in a heap upon the ground.
All the pink and silver crumpled up on the ground.

I would be the pink and silver as I ran along the paths,
And he would stumble after,
Bewildered by my laughter.
I should see the sun flashing from his sword hilt and the buckles on his shoes.
I would choose
To lead him in a maze along the patterned paths,
A bright and laughing maze for my heavy-booted lover,
Till he caught me in the shade,
And the buttons of his waistcoat bruised my body as he clasped me,
Aching, melting, unafraid.

With the shadows of the leaves and the sundrops,
And the plopping of the waterdrops,
All about us in the open afternoon—
I am very like to swoon
With the weight of this brocade,
For the sun shifts through the shade.

Underneath the fallen blossom
In my bosom,
Is a letter I have hid.
It was brought to me this morning by a rider from the Duke.
"Madam, we regret to inform you that Lord Hartwell
Died in action Thursday se'nnight."
As I read it in the white, morning sunlight,
The letters squirmed like snakes.
"Any answer, Madam?" said my footman.
"No," I told him.
"See that the messenger takes some refreshment.
No, no answer."

And I walked into the garden,
Up and down the patterned paths,
In my stiff, correct brocade.
The blue and yellow flowers stood up proudly in the sun,
Each one.
I stood upright too,
Held rigid to the pattern
By the stiffness of my gown.
Up and down I walked,
Up and down.

In a month he would have been my husband.
In a month, here, underneath this lime,
We would have broke the pattern;
He for me, and I for him,
He as Colonel, I as Lady,
On this shady seat.
He had a whim
That sunlight carried blessing.
And I answered, "It shall be as you have said."
Now he is dead.

In Summer and in Winter I shall walk
Up and down
The patterned garden paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown.
The squills and daffodils
Will give place to pillared roses, and to asters, and to snow.
I shall go
Up and down,
In my gown.
Gorgeously arrayed,
Boned and stayed.
And the softness of my body will be guarded from embrace
By each button, hook, and lace.
For the man who should loose me is dead,
Fighting with the Duke in Flanders,
In a pattern called a war.
Christ! What are patterns for?

THE SON

Southern Ohio Market Town

RIDGELY TORRENCE

I heard an old farm-wife,
  Selling some barley,
Mingle her life with life
  And the name "Charley."

Saying: "The crop's all in,
  We're about through now;
Long nights will soon begin,
  We're just us two now.

"Twelve bushel at sixty cents,
It's all I carried—
He sickened making fence;
He was to be married—

"It feels like frost was near—
His hair was curly.
The spring was late last year,
But the harvest early."

JOHN GORHAM

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

"Tell me what you're doing over here,
John Gorham—
Sighing hard and seeming to be sorry
when you're not.
Make me laugh or let me go now,
for long faces in the moonlight
Are a sign for me to say again a word
that you forgot."

"I'm over here to tell you what the
moon already
May have said or maybe shouted
ever since a year ago;
I'm over here to tell you what you
are, Jane Wayland,
And to make you rather sorry, I
should say, for being so."

"Tell me what you're saying to me
now, John Gorham,
Or you'll never see as much of me as
ribbons any more;
I'll vanish in as many ways as I have
toes and fingers,
And you'll not follow far for one
where flocks have been before."

"I'm sorry now you never saw the
flocks, Jane Wayland;
But you're the one to make of them
as many as you need.
And then about the vanishing: it's I
who mean to vanish;
And when I'm here no longer you'll
be done with me indeed."

"That's a way to tell me what I am,
John Gorham!
How am I to know myself until I
make you smile?
Try to look as if the moon were making faces at you,
And a little more as if you meant to
stay a little while."

"You are what it is that over rose-
blown gardens
Makes a pretty flutter for a season in
the sun.
You are what it is that with a mouse,
Jane Wayland,
Catches him and let's him go and
eats him up for fun."

"Sure I never took you for a mouse,
John Gorham.
All you say is easy, but so far from
being true
That I wish you wouldn't ever be
again the one to think so;
For it isn't cats and butterflies that I
would be to you."

"All your little animals are in one
picture—
One I've had before me since a year
ago to-night;
And the picture where they live will
be of you, Jane Wayland,
Till you find a way to kill them or to
keep them out of sight."

"Won't you ever see me as I am,
John Gorham,
Leaving out the foolishness and all I
never meant?

Somewhere in me there's a woman, if you know the way to find her—
Will you like me any better if I prove it and repent?"

"I doubt if I shall ever have the time, Jane Wayland;
And I dare say all this moonlight lying round us might as well
Fall for nothing on the shards of broken urns that are forgotten,
As on two that have no longer much of anything to tell."

THE DEATH OF THE HIRED MAN

ROBERT FROST

Mary sat musing on the lamp-flame at the table
Waiting for Warren. When she heard his step,
She ran on tip-toe down the darkened passage
To meet him in the doorway with the news
And put him on his guard. "Silas is back."
She pushed him outward with her through the door
And shut it after her. "Be kind," she said.
She took the market things from Warren's arms
And set them on the porch, then drew him down
To sit beside her on the wooden steps.

"When was I ever anything but kind to him?
But I'll not have the fellow back," he said.
"I told him so last haying, didn't I?
'If he left then,' I said, 'that ended it.'
What good is he? Who else will harbour him
At his age for the little he can do?
What help he is there's no depending on.
Off he goes always when I need him most.
'He thinks he ought to earn a little pay,
Enough at least to buy tobacco with,
So he won't have to beg and be beholden.'
'All right,' I say, 'I can't afford to pay
Any fixed wages, though I wish I could.'
'Someone else can.' 'Then someone else will have to.'
I shouldn't mind his bettering himself
If that was what it was. You can be certain
When he begins like that, there's someone at him
Trying to coax him off with pocket-money,—
In haying time, when any help is scarce.
In winter he comes back to us. I'm done."

"Sh! not so loud: he'll hear you," Mary said.

"I want him to: he'll have to soon or late."

"He's worn out. He's asleep beside the stove.
When I came up from Rowe's I found him here,
Huddled against the barn-door fast asleep,
A miserable sight, and frightening, too—

You needn't smile—I didn't recognise him—
I wasn't looking for him—and he's changed.
Wait till you see."

"Where did you say he'd been?"

"He didn't say. I dragged him to the house,
And gave him tea and tried to make him smoke.
I tried to make him talk about his travels.
Nothing would do: he just kept nodding off."

"What did he say? Did he say anything?"

"But little."

"Anything? Mary, confess
He said he'd come to ditch the meadow for me."

"Warren!"

"But did he? I just want to know."

"Of course he did. What would you have him say?
Surely you wouldn't grudge the poor old man
Some humble way to save his self-respect.
He added, if you really care to know,
He meant to clear the upper pasture, too.
That sounds like something you have heard before?
Warren, I wish you could have heard the way
He jumbled everything. I stopped to look
Two or three times—he made me feel so queer—
To see if he was talking in his sleep.
He ran on Harold Wilson—you remember—
The boy you had in haying four years since.
He's finished school, and teaching in his college.
Silas declares you'll have to get him back.
He says they two will make a team for work:
Between them they will lay this farm as smooth!
The way he mixed that in with other things.
He thinks young Wilson a likely lad, though daft
On education—you know how they fought
All through July under the blazing sun,
Silas up on the cart to build the load,
Harold along beside to pitch it on."

"Yes, I took care to keep well out of earshot."

"Well, those days trouble Silas like a dream.
You wouldn't think they would. How some things linger!
Harold's young college boy's assurance piqued him.
After so many years he still keeps finding
Good arguments he sees he might have used.

I sympathise. I know just how it feels
To think of the right thing to say too late.
Harold's associated in his mind with Latin.
He asked me what I thought of Harold's saying
He studied Latin like the violin
Because he liked it—that an argument!
He said he couldn't make the boy believe
He could find water with a hazel prong—
Which showed how much good school had ever done him.
He wanted to go over that. But most of all
He thinks if he could have another chance
To teach him how to build a load of hay—"

"I know, that's Silas' one accomplishment.
He bundles every forkful in its place,
And tags and numbers it for future reference,
So he can find and easily dislodge it
In the unloading. Silas does that well.
He takes it out with bunches like big birds' nests
You never see him standing on the hay
He's trying to lift, straining to lift himself."

"He thinks if he could teach him that, he'd be
Some good perhaps to someone in the world.
He hates to see a boy the fool of books.
Poor Silas, so concerned for other folk,
And nothing to look backward to with pride,
And nothing to look forward to with hope,
So now and never any different."

Part of a moon was falling down the west,
Dragging the whole sky with it to the hills.
Its light poured softly in her lap. She saw
And spread her apron to it. She put out her hand
Among the harp-like morning-glory strings,
Taut with the dew from garden bed to eaves,
As if she played unheard the tenderness
That wrought on him beside her in the night.
"Warren," she said, "he has come home to die:
You needn't be afraid he'll leave you this time."

"Home," he mocked gently.

"Yes, what else but home?
It all depends on what you mean by home.
Of course he's nothing to us, any more
Than was the hound that came a stranger to us
Out of the woods, worn out upon the trail."

"Home is the place where, when you have to go there,
They have to take you in."

"I should have called it
Something you somehow haven't to deserve."

Warren leaned out and took a step or two,
Picked up a little stick, and brought it back
And brought it in his hand and tossed it by.
"Silas has better claim on us you think
Than his brother? Thirteen little miles
As the road winds would bring him to his door.
Silas has walked that far no doubt today.
Why didn't he go there? His brother's rich,
A somebody—director in the bank."

"He never told us that."

"We know it though."

"I think his brother ought to help, of course.
I'll see to that if there is nothing. He ought of right
To take him in, and might be willing to—
He may be better than appearances.
But have some pity on Silas. Do you think
If he'd had any pride in claiming kin
Or anything he looked for from his brother,
He'd keep so still about him all this time?"

"I wonder what's between them."

"I can tell you.
Silas is what he is—we wouldn't mind him—
But just the kind that kinsfolk can't abide.
He never did a thing so very bad.
He don't know why he isn't quite as good
As anyone. He won't be made ashamed
To please his brother, worthless though he is."

"*I* can't think Si ever hurt anyone."

"No, but he hurt my heart the way he lay
And rolled his old head on that sharp-edged chair-back.
He wouldn't let me put him on the lounge.
You must go in and see what you can do.
I made the bed up for him there to-night.
You'll be surprised at him—how much he's broken.
His working days are done; I'm sure of it."

"I'd not be in a hurry to say that."

"I haven't been. Go, look, see for yourself.
But, Warren, please remember how it is;
He's come to help you ditch the meadow.
He has a plan. You mustn't laugh at him.
He may not speak of it, and then he may.
I'll sit and see if that small sailing cloud
Will hit or miss the moon."

It hit the moon.
Then there were three there, making a dim row,
The moon, the little silver cloud, and she.

Warren returned—too soon, it seemed to her,
Slipped to her side, caught up her hand and waited.

"Warren," she questioned.

"Dead," was all he answered.

THE HORSE THIEF

William Rose Benét

There he moved, cropping the grass at the purple canyon's lip.
His mane was mixed with the moonlight that silvered his snow-white side,
For the moon sailed out of a cloud with the wake of a spectral ship.
I crouched and I crawled on my belly, my lariat coil looped wide.

Dimly and dark the mesas broke on the starry sky.
A pall covered every color of their gorgeous glory at noon.
I smelt the yucca and mesquite, and stifled my heart's quick cry,
And wormed and crawled on my belly to where he moved against the moon!

Some Moorish barb was that mustang's sire. His lines were beyond all wonder.
From the prick of his ears to the flow of his tail he ached in my throat and eyes.
Steel and velvet grace! As the prophet says, God had "clothed his neck with thunder."
Oh, marvelous with the drifting cloud he drifted across the skies!

And then I was near at hand—crouched, and balanced, and cast the coil;
And the moon was smothered in cloud, and the rope through my hands with a rip!
But somehow I gripped and clung, with the blood in my brain aboil,—
With a turn round the rugged tree-stump there on the purple canyon's lip.

Right into the stars he reared aloft, his red eye rolling and raging.
He whirled and sunfished and lashed, and rocked the earth to thunder and flame.
He squealed like a regular devil horse. I was haggard and spent and aging—
Roped clean, but almost storming clear, his fury too fierce to tame.

And I cursed myself for a tenderfoot moon-dazzled to play the part,
But I was doubly desperate then, with the posse pulled out from town,
Or I'd never have tried it. I only knew I must get a mount and a start.
The filly had snapped her foreleg short. I had had to shoot her down.

So there he struggled and strangled,
and I snubbed him around the
tree.
Nearer, a little nearer—hoofs plant-
ed, and lolling tongue—
Till a sudden slack pitched me back-
ward. He reared right on top of
me.
Mother of God—that moment! He
missed me . . . and up I swung.

Somehow, gone daft completely and
clawing a bunch of his mane,
As he stumbled and tripped in the
lariat, there I was—up and
astride
And cursing for seven counties! And
the mustang? *Just insane!*
Crack-bang! went the rope; we
cannoned off the tree—then—
gods, that ride!

A rocket—that's all, a rocket! I dug
with my teeth and nails.
Why, we never hit even the high
spots (though I hardly remember
things),
But I heard a monstrous boom-
ing like a thunder of flapping
sails
When he spread—well, *call* me a
liar!—when he spread those wings,
those wings!

So white that my eyes were blinded,
thick-feathered and wide un-
furled
They beat the air into billows.
We sailed, and the earth was
gone.
Canyon and desert and mesa with-
ered below, with the world.
And then I knew that mustang;
for I—was Bellerophon!

Yes, glad as the Greek, and mounted
on a horse of the elder gods,
With never a magic bridle or a
fountain-mirror nigh!
*My chaps and spurs and holster must
have looked it?* What's the odds?
I'd a leg over lightning and thun-
der, careering across the sky!

And forever streaming before me,
fanning my forehead cool,
Flowed a mane of molten silver;
and just before my thighs
(As I gripped his velvet-muscled ribs,
while I cursed myself for a fool),
The steady pulse of those pinions—
their wonderful fall and rise!

The bandanna I bought in Bowie
blew loose and whipped from my
neck.
My shirt was stuck to my shoul-
ders and ribboning out behind.
The stars were dancing, wheeling and
glancing, dipping with smirk and
beck.
The clouds were flowing, dusking
and glowing. We rode a roaring
wind.

We soared through the silver star-
light to knock at the planets'
gates.
New shimmering constellations
came whirling into our ken.
Red stars and green and golden
swung out of the void that waits
For man's great last adventure;
the Signs took shape—and then

I knew the lines of that Centaur the
moment I saw him come!
The musical-box of the heavens all
around us rolled to a tune

That tinkled and chimed and trilled
with silver sounds that struck
you dumb,
As if some archangel were grinding
out the music of the moon.

Melody-drunk on the Milky Way,
as we swept and soared hilar-
ious,
Full in our pathway, sudden he
stood—the Centaur of the Stars,
Flashing from head and hoofs and
breast! I knew him for Sagit-
tarius.
He reared, and bent and drew his
bow. He crouched as a boxer
spars.

Flung back on his haunches, weird he
loomed—then leapt—and the
dim void lightened.
Old White Wings shied and swerved
aside, and fled from the splendor-
shod.
Through a flashing welter of worlds
we charged. I knew why my
horse was frightened.
He *had* two faces—a dog's and a
man's—that Babylonian god!

Also, he followed us real as fear.
Ping! went an arrow past.
My broncho buck-jumped, hump-
ing high. We plunged . . . I
guess that's all!
I lay on the purple canyon's lip, when
I opened my eyes at last—
Stiff and sore and my head like a
drum, but I broke no bones in
the fall.

So you know—and now you may
string me up. Such was the way
you caught me.
Thank you for letting me tell it
straight, though you never could
greatly care.
For I took a horse that wasn't mine!
. . . But there's one the heavens
brought me,
And I'll hang right happy, because
I know he is waiting for me up
there.

From creamy muzzle to cannon-bone,
by God, he's a peerless won-
der!
He is steel and velvet and furnace-
fire, and death's supremest prize;
And never again shall be roped on
earth that neck that is "clothed
with thunder" . . .
String me up, Dave! Go dig my
grave! *I rode him across the skies.*

THE CONGO

A Study of the Negro Race

VACHEL LINDSAY

I—THEIR BASIC SAVAGERY

Fat black bucks in a wine-barrel
room,
Barrel-house kings, with feet un-
stable,
Sagged and reeled and pounded on the table, *A deep rolling bass*
Pounded on the table,
Beat an empty barrel with the handle
of a broom,
Hard as they were able,
Boom, boom, BOOM,
With a silk umbrella and the handle
of a broom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM.
THEN I had religion, THEN I had a
vision.
I could not turn from their revel in
derision.

THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK, *More deliberate. Solemnly chanted*
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.
Then along that riverbank
A thousand miles
Tattooed cannibals danced in files;
Then I heard the boom of the blood-lust song
And a thigh-bone beating on a tin-pan gong.
And "BLOOD!" screamed *A rapidly piling climax of speed and racket*
the whistles and the fifes of the warriors,
"BLOOD!" screamed the skull-faced, lean witch-doctors;
"Whirl ye the deadly voo-doo rattle,
Harry the uplands,
Steal all the cattle,
Rattle-rattle, rattle-rattle,
Bing!
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM!"
A roaring, epic, rag-time tune *With a philosophic pause*
From the mouth of the Congo
To the Mountains of the Moon.
Death is an Elephant, *Shrilly and with a heavily accented metre*
Torch-eyed and horrible,
Foam-flanked and terrible.
BOOM, steal the pygmies,
BOOM, kill the Arabs,
BOOM, kill the white men,
Hoo, Hoo, Hoo. *Like the wind in the chimney*
Listen to the yell of Leopold's ghost
Burning in Hell for his hand-maimed host.
Hear how the demons chuckle and yell
Cutting his hands off, down in Hell.
Listen to the creepy proclamation,
Blown through the lairs of the forest-nation,
Blown past the white-ants' hill of clay,
Blown past the marsh where the butterflies play:—
"Be careful what you do,
Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo, *All the o sounds very golden. Heavy accents very heavy. Light accents very light. Last line whispered*
And all of the other
Gods of the Congo,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you."

II—THEIR IRREPRESSIBLE HIGH SPIRITS

Wild crap-shooters with a whoop and a call *Rather shrill and high*
Danced the juba in their gambling-hall
And laughed fit to kill, and shook the town,
And guyed the policemen and laughed them down
With a boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM.
THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK, *Read exactly as in first section.*
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.
A negro fairyland swung into view, *Lay emphasis on the delicate ideas. Keep as light-footed as possible*
A minstrel river
Where dreams come true.
The ebony palace soared on high
Through the blossoming trees to the evening sky.
The inlaid porches and casements shone
With gold and ivory and elephant-bone.

And the black crowd laughed till their sides were sore
At the baboon butler in the agate door,
And the well-known tunes of the parrot band
That trilled on the bushes of that magic land.

A troupe of skull-faced witch-men came *With pomposity*
Through the agate doorway in suits of flame,
Yea, long-tailed coats with a gold-leaf crust
And hats that were covered with diamond-dust.
And the crowd in the court gave a whoop and a call
And danced the juba from wall to wall.
But the witch-men suddenly stilled the throng *With a great deliberation and ghostliness*
With a stern cold glare, and a stern old song:
"Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you."...
Just then from the doorway, as fat as shotes *With overwhelming assurance, good cheer, and pomp*
Came the cake-walk princes in their long red coats,
Canes with a brilliant lacquer shine,
And tall silk hats that were red as wine.
And they pranced with their butterfly partners there, *With growing speed and sharply marked dance-rhythm*
Coal-black maidens with pearls in their hair,
Knee-skirts trimmed with the jassamine sweet,
And bells on their ankles and little black feet.

And the couples railed at the chant and the frown
Of the witch-men lean, and laughed them down.
(Oh, rare was the revel, and well worth while
That made those glowering witch-men smile.)

The cake-walk royalty then began
To walk for a cake that was tall as a man
To the tune of "Boomlay, boomlay, Boom,"
While the witch-men laughed, with a sinister air, *With a touch of negro dialect, and as rapidly as possible toward the end*
And sang with the scalawags prancing there:
"Walk with care, walk with care,
Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,
And all of the other
Gods of the Congo,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.
Beware, beware, walk with care,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom.
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay,
Boom."
Oh, rare was the revel, and well worth while *Slow philosophic calm*
That made those glowering witch-men smile.

III—THE HOPE OF THEIR RELIGION

A good old negro in the slums of the town *Heavy bass. With a literal imitation of camp-meeting racket, and trance*
Preached at a sister for her velvet gown.
Howled at a brother for his low-down ways,
His prowling, guzzling, sneak-thief days.

Beat on the Bible till he wore it out
Starting the jubilee revival shout.
And some had visions, as they stood on chairs,
And sang of Jacob, and the golden stairs.
And they all repented, a thousand strong,
From their stupor and savagery and sin and wrong,
And slammed with their hymn-books till they shook the room
With "Glory, glory, glory,"
And "Boom, boom, BOOM."
THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK, *Exactly as in the first section. Begin with terror and power, end with joy*
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.
And the gray sky opened like a new-rent veil
And showed the apostles with their coats of mail.
In bright white steel they were seated round,
And their fire-eyes watched where the Congo wound.
And the twelve Apostles, from their thrones on high,
Thrilled all the forest with their heavenly cry:
"Mumbo-Jumbo will die in the jungle;
Never again will he hoo-doo you,
Never again will he hoo-doo you." *Sung to the tune of "Hark, ten thousand harps and voices"*

Then along that river, a thousand miles *With growing deliberation and joy*
The vine-snared trees fell down in files.
Pioneer angels cleared the way
For a Congo paradise, for babes at play,
For sacred capitals, for temples clean.
Gone were the skull-faced witch-men lean.
There, where the wild ghost-gods had wailed, *In a rather high key—as delicately as possible*
A million boats of the angels sailed
With oars of silver, and prows of blue
And silken pennants that the sun shone through.
'Twas a land transfigured, 'twas a new creation.
Oh, a singing wind swept the negro nation,
And on the through the backwoods clearing flew:—
"Mumbo-Jumbo is dead in the jungle. *To the tune of "Hark, ten thousand harps and voices"*
Never again will he hoo-doo you.
Never again will he hoo-doo you."
Redeemed were the forests, the beasts and the men,
And only the vulture dared again
By the far, lone mountains of the moon
To cry, in the silence, the Congo tune:
"Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you, *Dying down into a penetrating, terrified whisper*
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.
Mumbo . . . Jumbo . . . will . . . hoo-doo . . . you."

THE BULL

RALPH HODGSON

See an unhappy bull,
Sick in soul and body both,
Slouching in the undergrowth
Of the forest beautiful,

Banished from the herd he led,
Bulls and cows a thousand head.

Cranes and gaudy parrots go
Up and down the burning sky;
Tree-top cats purr drowsily
In the dim-day green below;
And troops of monkeys, nutting, some,
All disputing, go and come;

And things abominable sit
Picking offal buck or swine,
On the mess and over it
Burnished flies and beetles shine
And spiders big as bladders lie
Under hemlocks ten foot high;

And a dotted serpent curled
Round and round and round a tree,
Yellowing its greenery,
Keeps a watch on all the world,
All the world and this old bull
In the forest beautiful.

Bravely by his fall he came:
One he led, a bull of blood
Newly come to lustihood,
Fought and put his prince to shame
Snuffed and pawed the prostrate head
Tameless even while it bled.

There they left him, every one,
Left him there without a lick,
Left him for the birds to pick,
Left him there for carrion,
Vilely from their bosom cast
Wisdom, worth and love at last.

When the lion left his lair
And roared his beauty through the hills,
And the vultures pecked their quills
And flew into the middle air,
Then their prince no more to reign
Came to life and lived again.

He snuffed the herd in far retreat,
He saw the blood upon the ground,
And snuffed the burning airs around
Still with beevish odours sweet,
While the blood ran down his head
And his mouth ran slaver red.

Pity him, this fallen chief,
All his splendour, all his strength
All his body's breadth and length
Dwindled down with shame and grief,
Half the bull he was before,
Bones and leather, nothing more.

See him standing dewlap-deep
In the rushes at the lake,
Surly, stupid, half asleep,
Waiting for his heart to break
And the birds to join the flies
Feasting at his bloodshot eyes,—

Standing with his head hung down
In a stupor, dreaming things:
Green savannas, jungles brown,
Battlefields and bellowings,
Bulls undone and lions dead
And vultures flapping overhead.

Dreaming things: of days he spent
With his mother gaunt and lean
In the valley warm and green,
Full of baby wonderment,
Blinking out of silly eyes
At a hundred mysteries;

Dreaming over once again
How he wandered with a throng
Of bulls and cows a thousand strong,
Wandered on from plain to plain,
Up the hill and down the dale,
Always at his mother's tail;

How he lagged behind the herd,
Lagged and tottered, weak of limb,
And she turned and ran to him,
Blaring at the loathly bird
Stationed always in the skies
Waiting for the flesh that dies.

Dreaming maybe of a day
When her drained and drying paps
Turned him to the sweets and saps,
Richer fountains by the way,
And she left the bull she bore
And he looked to her no more;

And his little frame grew stout,
And his little legs grew strong
And the way was not so long;
And his little horns came out,
And he played at butting trees
And boulder-stones and tortoises,

Joined a game of knobby skulls
With the youngsters of his year,
All the other little bulls,
Learning both to bruise and bear,
Learning how to stand a shock
Like a little bull of rock.

Dreaming of a day less dim,
Dreaming of a time less far,
When the faint but certain star
Of destiny burned clear for him,
And a fierce and wild unrest
Broke the quiet of his breast,

And the gristles of his youth
Hardened in his comely pow,
And he came to fighting growth,
Beat his bull and won his cow,
And flew his tail and trampled off
Passed the tallest, vain enough,
And curved about in splendour full
And curved again and snuffed the airs
As who should say Come out who dares!
And all beheld a bull, a Bull,
And knew that here was surely one
That backed for no bull, fearing none.

And the leader of the herd
Looked and saw, and beat the ground,
And shook the forest with his sound,
Bellowed at the loathly bird
Stationed always in the skies
Waiting for the flesh that dies.

Dreaming, this old bull forlorn,
Surely dreaming of the hour
When he came to sultan power,
And they owned him master-horn,
Chiefest bull of all among
Bulls and cows a thousand strong;

And in all the tramping herd
Not a bull that barred his way,
Not a cow that said him nay,
Not a bull or cow that erred
In the furnace of his look,
Dared a second, worse rebuke;

Not in all the forest wide,
Jungle, thicket, pasture, fen,
Not another dared him then,
Dared him and again defied;
Not a sovereign buck or boar
Came a second time for more;

Not a serpent that survived
Once the terrors of his hoof
Risked a second time reproof,
Came a second time and lived,
Not a serpent in its skin
Came again for discipline;

Not a leopard bright as flame,
Flashing fingerhooks of steel,
That a wooden tree might feel,
Met his fury once and came
For a second reprimand,
Not a leopard in the land;

Not a lion of them all,
Not a lion of the hills,
Hero of a thousand kills,
Dared a second fight and fall,
Dared that ram terrific twice,
Paid a second time the price. . . .

Pity him, this dupe of dream,
Leader of the herd again
Only in his daft old brain,
Once again the bull supreme
And bull enough to bear the part
Only in his tameless heart.

Pity him that he must wake;
Even now the swarm of flies
Blackening his bloodshot eyes
Bursts and blusters round the lake,
Scattered from the feast half-fed,
By great shadows overhead.

And the dreamer turns away
From his visionary herds
And his splendid yesterday,
Turns to meet the loathly birds
Flocking round him from the skies,
Waiting for the flesh that dies.

DOG

HAROLD MONRO

You little friend, your nose is ready; you sniff,
Asking for that expected walk,
(Your nostrils full of the happy rabbit-whiff)
And almost talk.

And so the moment becomes a moving force;
Coats glide down from their pegs in the humble dark;
The sticks grow live to the stride of their vagrant course.
You scamper the stairs,
Your body informed with the scent and the track and the mark
Of stoats and weasels, moles and badgers and hares.

We are going *out.* You know the pitch of the word,
Probing the tone of thought as it comes through fog
And reaches by devious means (half-smelt, half-heard)
The four-legged brain of a walk-ecstatic dog.

Out in the garden your head is already low.
(Can you smell the rose? Ah, no.)
But your limbs can draw
Life from the earth through the touch of your padded paw.

Now, sending a little look to us behind,
Who follow slowly the track of your lovely play,
You carry our bodies forward away from mind
Into the light and fun of your useless day.

* * * *

Thus, for your walk, we took ourselves, and went
Out by the hedge and the tree to the open ground.
You ran, in delightful strata of wafted scent,

Over the hill without seeing the view;
Beauty is smell upon primitive smell to you:
To you, as to us, it is distant and rarely found.

Home . . .. and further joy will be surely there:
Supper waiting full of the taste of bone.
You throw up your nose again, and sniff, and stare
For the rapture known
Of the quick wild gorge of food and the still lie-down
While your people talk above you in the light
Of candles, and your dreams will merge and drown
Into the bed-delicious hours of night.

MILK FOR THE CAT

HAROLD MONRO

When the tea is brought at five o'clock,
And all the neat curtains are drawn with care,
The little black cat with bright green eyes
Is suddenly purring there.

At first she pretends, having nothing to do,
She has come in merely to blink by the grate,
But, though tea may be late or the milk may be sour,
She is never late.

And presently her agate eyes
Take a soft large milky haze,
And her independent casual glance
Becomes a stiff, hard gaze.

Then she stamps her claws or lifts her ears,
Or twists her tail and begins to stir,
Till suddenly all her lithe body becomes
One breathing, trembling purr.

The children eat and wriggle and laugh
The two old ladies stroke their silk:
But the cat is grown small and thin with desire,
Transformed to a creeping lust for milk.

The white saucer like some full moon descends
At last from the clouds of the table above;
She sighs and dreams and thrills and glows,
Transfigured with love.

She nestles over the shining rim,
Buries her chin in the creamy sea;
Her tail hangs loose: each drowsy paw
Is doubled under each bending knee.

A long, dim ecstasy holds her life;
Her world is an infinite shapeless white,
Till her tongue has curled the last holy drop,
Then she sinks back into the night,

Draws and dips her body to heap
Her sleepy nerves in the great armchair,
Lies defeated and buried deep
Three or four hours unconscious there.

MASSASAUGA—THE MEADOW RATTLESNAKE

HAMLIN GARLAND

A cold coiled line of mottled lead,
He lies where grazing cattle tread,
And lifts a fanged and spiteful head.

His touch is deadly, and his eyes
Are hot with hatred and surprise—
Death waits and watches where he lies.

His hate is turned toward everything!
He is the undisputed king
Of every woodland path or spring.

His naked fang is raised to smite
All passing things; light
Is not swifter than his bite.

His touch is deadly, and his eyes
Are hot with hatred and surprise—
Death waits and watches where he lies.

THE MONKEY

NANCY CAMPBELL

I saw you hunched and shivering on the stones,
The bleak wind piercing to your fragile bones,
Your shabby scarlet all inadequate:
A little ape that had such human eyes
They seemed to hide behind their miseries—
Their dumb and hopeless bowing down to fate—
Some puzzled wonder. Was your monkey soul
Sickening with memories of gorgeous days,
Of tropic playfellows and forest ways,
Where, agile, you could swing from bole to bole
In an enchanted twilight with great flowers
For stars; or on a bough the long night hours
Sit out in rows, and chatter at the moon?
Shuffling you went, your tiny chilly hand
Outstretched for what you did not understand;
Your puckered mournful face begging a boon
That but enslaved you more. They who passed by
Saw nothing sorrowful; gave laugh or stare,
Unheeding that the little antic there
Played in the gutter such a tragedy.

THE PLAINT OF THE CAMEL

CHARLES EDWARD CARRYL

"Canary-birds feed on sugar and seed,
Parrots have crackers to crunch;
And as for the poodles, they tell me the noodles
Have chickens and cream for their lunch.
But there's never a question
About MY digestion—
ANYTHING does for me!

"Cats, you're aware, can repose in a chair,
Chickens can roost upon rails;
Puppies are able to sleep in a stable,
And oysters can slumber in pails.
But no one supposes
A poor Camel dozes—
ANY PLACE does for me!

"Lambs are enclosed where it's never exposed,
Coops are constructed for hens;
Kittens are treated to houses well heated,
And pigs are protected by pens.
But a Camel comes handy
Wherever it's sandy—
ANYWHERE does for me!

"People would laugh if you rode a giraffe,
Or mounted the back of an ox;
It's nobody's habit to ride on a rabbit,
Or try to bestraddle a fox.
But as for a Camel, he's
Ridden by families—
ANY LOAD does for me!

"A snake is as round as a hole in the ground;
Weasels are wavy and sleek;
And no alligator could ever be straighter
Than lizards that live in a creek.
But a Camel's all lumpy
And bumpy and humpy—
ANY SHAPE does for me!"

THE DONKEY

GILBERT K. CHESTERTON

When fishes flew and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the moon was blood,
Then surely I was born;

With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet.

AT THE AQUARIUM

MAX EASTMAN

Serene the silver fishes glide,
Stern-lipped, and pale, and wonder-eyed!
As through the aged deeps of ocean,
They glide with wan and wavy motion!
They have no pathway where they go,
They flow like water to and fro,
They watch with never-winking eyes,
They watch with staring, cold surprise,
The level people in the air,
The people peering, peering there:
Who wander also to and fro,
And know not why or where they go,
Yet have a wonder in their eyes,
Sometimes a pale and cold surprise.

THE SWAN

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

Under a wall of bronze,
Where beeches dip and trail
Their branches in the water;
With red-tipped head and wings—
A beaked ship under sail—
There glides a single swan.

Under the autumn trees
He goes. The branches quiver,
Dance in the wraith-like water,
Which ripples beneath the sedge

With the slackening furrow that glides
In his wake when he is gone:
The beeches bow dark heads.

Into the windless dusk,
Where in mist great towers stand
Guarding a lonely strand,
That is bodiless and dim,
He speeds with easy stride;
And I would go beside,
Till the low brown hills divide
At last, for me and him.

MOTHERHOOD

Agnes Lee

Mary, the Christ long slain, passed silently,
Following the children joyously astir
Under the cedrus and the olive-tree,
Pausing to let their laughter float to her.
Each voice an echo of a voice more dear,
She saw a little Christ in every face.
Then came another woman gliding near
To watch the tender life which filled the place.
And Mary sought the woman's hand, and spoke:
"I know thee not, yet know thy memory tossed
With all a thousand dreams their eyes evoke
Who bring to thee a child beloved and lost.

"I, too, have rocked my little One.
And He was fair,
Oh, fairer than the fairest sun,
And like its rays through amber spun
His sun-bright hair!
Still I can see it shine and shine."
"Even so," the woman said, "was mine."

"His ways were ever darling ways"—
And Mary smiled—
"So soft, so clinging! All our days
Were jewels strung on cords of love.
My little Child!
My infinite star! My music fled!"
"Even so was mine," the woman said.

And Mary whispered: "Tell me, thou,
Of thine." And she:
"Oh, mine was rosy as a bough
Blooming with roses, and his eyes
Had lights of the sea!
His balmy fingers left a thrill
Deep in my breast that warms me still."

Then she gazed down some wilder, darker hour,
And said—when Mary questioned, knowing not,
"Who art thou, mother of so sweet a flower?"—
"I am the mother of Iscariot."

LULLABY

Paul Laurence Dunbar

Bedtime's come fu' little boys,
Po' little lamb,
Too tiahed out to make a noise,
Po' little lamb.
You gwine t' have to-morrer sho'?
Yes, you tole me dat befo',
Don' you fool me, chile, no mo',
Po' little lamb.

You been bad de livelong day,
  Po' little lamb.
Th'owin' stones an' runnin' 'way,
  Po' little lamb
My, but you's a-runnin' wil',
Look jes' lak some po' folks' chile;
Mam' gwine whup you atter while,
  Po' little lamb.

Come hyeah! you mos' tiahed to def,
  Po' little lamb.
Played yo'se'f clean out o' bref,
  Po' little lamb.
See dem han's now—sich a sight!
Would you evah b'lieve dey's white?
Stan' still twell I wash 'em right,
  Po' little lamb.

Jes' cain't hol' yo' haid up straight,
  Po' little lamb.
Hadn't oughter played so late,
  Po' little lamb.
Mammy do' know what she'd do,
Ef de chillun's all lak you;
You's a caution now fu' true,
  Po' little lamb.

Lay yo' haid down in my lap,
  Po' little lamb.
Y' ought to have a right good slap,
  Po' little lamb.
You been runnin' roun' a heap.
Shet dem eyes an' don' you peep,
Dah now, dah now, go to sleep,
  Po' little lamb.

THE MOTHER IN THE HOUSE

HERMANN HAGEDORN

For such as you, I do believe,
Spirits their softest carpets weave,
And spread them out with gracious hand
Wherever you walk, wherever you stand.

For such as you, of scent and dew
Spirits their rarest nectar brew,
And where you sit and where you sup
Pour beauty's elixir in your cup.

For all day long, like other folk,
You bear the burden, wear the yoke,
And yet when I look in your eyes at eve
You are lovelier than ever, I do believe.

INDIAN SUMMER

After completing a book for one now dead

WILLIAM ELLERY LEONARD

(*O Earth-and-Autumn of the Setting Sun,*
She is not by, to know my task is done!)
In the brown grasses slanting with the wind,
Lone as a lad whose dog's no longer near,
Lone as a mother whose only child has sinned
Lone on the loved hill. . . . And below me here
The thistle-down in tremulous atmosphere
Along red clusters of the sumach streams;
The shrivelled stalks of goldenrod are sere,
And crisp and white their flashing old racemes.
(. . . forever . . . forever . . . forever . . .)
This is the lonely season of the year
This is the season of our lonely dreams.

(*O Earth-and-Autumn of the Setting Sun,*
She is not by, to know my task is done!)
The corn-shocks westward on the stubble plain
Show like an Indian village of dead days;
The long smoke trails behind the crawling train,
And floats atop the distant woods ablaze
With orange, crimson, purple. The low haze
Dims the scarped bluffs above the inland sea,
Whose wide and slaty waters in cold glaze
Await yon full-moon of the night-to-be.
(. . . . far . . . and far . . . and far . . .)
These are the solemn horizons of man's ways,
These the horizons of solemn thought to me.

(*O Earth-and-Autumn of the Setting Sun,*
She is not by, to know my task is done!)
And this the hill she visited, as friend;
And this the hill she lingered on, as bride—
Down in the yellow valley is the end:
They laid her . . . in no evening autumn tide . . .
Under fresh flowers of that May morn, beside
The queens and cave-women of ancient earth.

This is the hill . . . and over my city's towers
Across the world from sunset, yonder in air,
Shines, through its scaffoldings, a civic dome
Of piled masonry, which shall be ours
To give, completed, to our children there . . .
And yonder far roof of my abandoned home
Shall house new laughter . . . Yet I tried . . . I tried . . .
And, ever wistful of the doom to come,
I built her many a fire for love . . . for mirth . . .
(When snows were falling on our oaks outside,
Dear, many a winter fire upon the hearth) . . .
(. . . farewell . . . farewell . . . farewell . . .)
We dare not think too long on those who died,
While still so many yet must come to birth.

I GIVE THANKS

GRACE FALLOW NORTON

There's one that I once loved so much
I am no more the same.
I give thanks for that transforming touch.
I tell you not his name.

He has become a sign to me
For flowers and for fire.
For song he is a sign to me
And for the broken lyre

And I have known him in a book
And never touched his hand.
And he is dead—I need not look
For him through his green land.

Heaven may not be. I have no faith,
  But this desire I have—
To take my soul on my last breath,
  To lift it like a wave,

And surge unto his star and say,
  His friendship had been heaven;
And pray, for clouds that closed his day
  May light at last be given!

And say, he shone at noon so bright
  I learned to run and rejoice!
And beg him for one last delight—
  The true sound of his voice.

There's one that once moved me so much
  I am no more the same;
And I pray I too, I too, may touch
  Some heart with singing flame.

LOCHANILAUN

Francis Brett Young

This is the image of my last content:
My soul shall be a little lonely lake,
So hidden that no shadow of man may break
The folding of its mountain battlement;
Only the beautiful and innocent
Whiteness of sea-born cloud drooping to shake
Cool rain upon the reed-beds, or the wake
Of churn'd cloud in a howling wind's descent.
For there shall be no terror in the night
When stars that I have loved are born in me,
And cloudy darkness I will hold most fair;
But this shall be the end of my delight:
That you, my lovely one, may stoop and see
Your image in the mirrored beauty there.

THE STIRRUP-CUP

Louis Untermeyer

Your eyes—and a thousand stars
  Leap from the night to aid me;
I scale the impossible bars,
  I laugh at a world that dismayed me.

Your voice—and the thundering skies
  Tremble and cease to appall me—
Coward no longer, I rise
  Spurred for what battles may call me.

Your eyes—and my purpose grows strong;
  Your lips—and high passions complete me
For your love, it is armor and Song—
  And where is the thing to defeat me!

THE THUNDER-SHOWER

John Hall Wheelock

The lightning flashed, and lifted
  The lids of heaven apart,
The fiery thunder rolled you
  All night long through my heart.

From dreams of you at dawn
  I rose to the window ledge:
The storm had passed away,
  The lake lapped on the sedge.

The lyre of heaven trembled
  Still with the thought of you,
The twilight on the waters,
  And all my spirit, too.

PROTHALAMION

Francis Brett Young

When the evening came my love said to me:
  Let us go into the garden now that the sky is cool;
The garden of black hellebore and rosemary,
  Where wild woodruff spills in a milky pool.

Low we passed in the twilight, for the wavering heat
  Of day had waned; and round that shaded plot
Of secret beauty the thickets clustered sweet:
  Here is heaven, our hearts whispered, but our lips spake not.

Between that old garden and seas of lazy foam
  Gloomy and beautiful alleys of trees arise
With spire of cypress and dreamy beechen dome,
  So dark that our enchanted sight knew nothing but the skies:

Veiled with a soft air, drench'd in the roses' musk
  Or the dusky, dark carnation's breath of clove:
No stars burned in their deeps, but through the dusk
  I saw my love's eyes, and they were brimmed with love.

No star their secret ravished, no wasting moon
  Mocked the sad transience of those eternal hours:
Only the soft, unseeing heaven of June,
  The ghosts of great trees, and the sleeping flowers.

For doves that crooned in the leafy noonday now
  Were silent; the night-jar sought his secret covers,
Nor even a mild sea-whisper moved a creaking bough—
  Was ever a silence deeper made for lovers?

Was ever a moment meeter made for love?
  Beautiful are your closed lips beneath my kiss;
And all your yielding sweetness beautiful—
  Oh, never in all the world was such a night as this!

NIGHT SONG AT AMALFI

Sara Teasdale

I asked the heaven of stars
  What I should give my love—
It answered me with silence,
  Silence above.

I asked the darkened sea
  Down where the fishermen go—
It answered me with silence,
  Silence below.

Oh, I could give him weeping,
  Or I could give him song—
But how can I give silence
  My whole life long?

"FEUERZAUBER"

Louis Untermeyer

I never knew the earth had so much gold—
The fields run over with it, and this hill
Hoary and old,
Is young with buoyant blooms that flame and thrill.

Such golden fires, such yellow—lo, how good
This spendthrift world, and what a lavish God—
This fringe of wood,
Blazing with buttercup and golden-rod.

You too, beloved, are changed. Again I see
Your face grow mystical, as on that night
You turned to me,
And all the trembling world—and you—were white.

Aye, you are touched; your singing lips grow dumb;
The fields absorb you, color you entire. . . .
And you become
A goddess standing in a world of fire!

THE FLIGHT

Sara Teasdale

Look back with longing eyes and know that I will follow,
Lift me up in your love as a light wing lifts a swallow,
Let our flight be far in sun or windy rain—
But what if I heard my first love calling me again?
Hold me on your heart as the brave sea holds the foam,
Take me far away to the hills that hide your home;
Peace shall thatch the roof and love shall latch the door—
But what if I heard my first love calling me once more?

SPRING NIGHT

Sara Teasdale

The park is filled with night and fog,
The veils are drawn about the world,
The drowsy lights along the paths
Are dim and pearled.

Gold and gleaming the empty streets,
Gold and gleaming the misty lake.
The mirrored lights like sunken swords,
Glimmer and shake.

Oh, is it not enough to be
Here with this beauty over me?
My throat should ache with praise, and I
Should kneel in joy beneath the sky.
O beauty, are you not enough?
Why am I crying after love
With youth, a singing voice, and eyes
To take earth's wonder with surprise?
Why have I put off my pride,
Why am I unsatisfied,—
I, for whom the pensive night
Binds her cloudy hair with light,—
I, for whom all beauty burns
Like incense in a million urns?
O beauty, are you not enough?
Why am I crying after love?

THE MINER

MAXWELL BODENHEIM

Those on the top say they know you,
Earth—they are liars.
You are my father, and the silence I
work in is my mother.
Only the son knows his father.
We are alike—sweaty, inarticulate of
soul, bending under thick knowl-
edge.
I drink and shout with my brothers
when above you—
Like most children we soon forget
the parents of our souls.
But you avidly grip us again—we
pay for the little noise of life we
steal.

CALIBAN IN THE COAL MINES

LOUIS UNTERMEYER

God, we don't like to complain
We know that the mine is no lark—
But—there's the pools from the
rain;
But—there's the cold and the
dark.

God, You don't know what it is—
You, in Your well-lighted sky—
Watching the meteors whizz;
Warm, with the sun always by.

God, if You had but the moon
Stuck in Your cap for a lamp,
Even You'd tire of it soon,
Down in the dark and the damp.

Nothing but blackness above
And nothing that moves but the
cars. . .
God, if You wish for our love,
Fling us a handful of stars!

FACTORIES

MARGARET WIDDEMER

I have shut my little sister in from
life and light
(For a rose, for a ribbon, for a
wreath across my hair),
I have made her restless feet still
until the night,
Locked from sweets of summer and
from wild spring air;
I who ranged the meadowlands, free
from sun to sun,
Free to sing and pull the buds and
watch the far wings fly,
I have bound my sister till her play-
ing time was done—
Oh, my little sister, was it I? Was it I?

I have robbed my sister of her day of
maidenhood
(For a robe, for a feather, for a
trinket's restless spark),
Shut from love till dusk shall fall,
how shall she know good,
How shall she go scatheless through
the sun-lit dark?
I who could be innocent, I who could
be gay,
I who could have love and mirth
before the light went by,
I have put my sister in her mating-
time away—
Sister, my young sister, was it I?
Was it I?

I have robbed my sister of the lips
against her breast,
(For a coin, for the weaving of my
children's lace and lawn),
Feet that pace beside the loom, hands
that cannot rest—
How can she know motherhood,
whose strength is gone?

I who took no heed of her, starved and labor-worn,
I, against whose placid heart my sleepy gold-heads lie,
Round my path they cry to me, little souls unborn—
God of Life! Creator! It was I! It was I!

MAN CARRYING BALE

HAROLD MONRO

The tough hand closes partly on the load;
Out of the mind, a voice
Calls, "Lift!" and the arms, remembering well their work,
Lengthen and pause for help.
Then a slow ripple flows from head to foot
While all the muscles call to one another:
"Lift!" and the bulging bale
Floats like a butterfly in June.

So moved the earliest carrier of bales,
And the same watchful sun
Glowed through his body feeding it with light.
So will the last one move,
And halt, and dip his head, and lay his load
Down, and the muscles will relax and tremble.
Earth, you designed your man
Beautiful both in labour and repose.

TO A DISCARDED STEEL RAIL

MAXWELL BODENHEIM

Straight strength pitched into the surliness of the ditch,
A soul you have—strength has always delicate secret reasons.
Your soul is a dull question.
I do not care for your strength, but for your stiff smile at Time—
A smile which men call rust.

THE TURBINE

To W. S. M.

HARRIET MONROE

Look at her—there she sits upon her throne
As ladylike and quiet as a nun!
But if you cross her—whew! her thunderbolts
Will shake the earth! She's proud as any queen,
The beauty—knows her royal business too,
To light the world, and does it night by night
When her gay lord, the sun, gives up his job.
I am her slave; I wake and watch and run
From dark till dawn beside her. All the while
She hums there softly, purring with delight
Because men bring the riches of the earth
To feed her hungry fires. I do her will
And dare not disobey, for her right hand
Is power, her left is terror, and her anger
Is havoc. Look—if I but lay a wire
Across the terminals of yonder switch
She'll burst her windings, rip her casings off,
And shriek till envious Hell shoots up its flames,
Shattering her very throne. And all her people,

The laboring, trampling, dreaming
crowds out there—
Fools and the wise who look to her
for light—
Will walk in darkness through the
liquid night
Submerged.

Sometimes I wonder why she stoops
To be my friend—oh yes, who talks
to me
And sings away my loneliness; my
friend
Though I am trivial and she sublime.
Hard-hearted?—No, tender and piti-
ful,
As all the great are. Every arrogant
grief
She comforts quietly, and all my joys
Dance to her measures through the
tolerant night.
She talks to me, tells me her troubles
too,
Just as I tell her mine. Perhaps she
feels
An ache deep down—that agonizing
stab
Of grit grating her bearings; then her
voice
Changes its tune, it wails and calls
to me
To soothe her anguish, and I run, her
slave,
Probe like a surgeon and relieve the
pain.

We have our jokes too, little mock-
eries
That no one else in all the swarming
world
Would see the point of. She will laugh
at me
To show her power: maybe her car-
bon packings
Leak steam, and I run madly back
and forth
To keep the infernal fiends from
breaking loose:
Suddenly she will throttle them her-
self
And chuckle softly, far above me
there,
At my alarms.

But there are moments—
hush!—
When my turn comes; her slave can
be her master,
Conquering her he serves. For she's
a woman,
Gets bored there on her throne, tired
of herself,
Tingles with power that turns to
wantonness.
Suddenly something's wrong—she
laughs at me,
Bedevils the frail wires with some
mad caress
That thrills blind space, calls down
ten thousand lightnings
To ruin her pomp and set her spirit
free.
Then with this puny hand, swift as
her threat,
Must I beat back the chaos, hold in
leash
Destructive furies, rescue her—even
her—
From the fierce rashness of her truant
mood,
And make me lord of far and near a
moment,
Startling the mystery. Last night I
did it—
Alone here with my hand upon her
heart
I faced the mounting fiends and
whipped them down;

And never a wink from the long file of lamps
Betrayed her to the world.

So there she sits,
Mounted on all the ages, at the peak
Of time. The first man dreamed of light, and dug
The sodden ignorance away, and cursed
The darkness; young primeval races dragged
Foundation stones, and piled into the void
Rage and desire; the Greek mounted and sang
Promethean songs and lit a signal fire:
The Roman bent his iron will to forge
Deep furnaces; slow epochs riveted
With hope the secret chambers: till at last
We, you and I, this living age of ours,
A new-winged Mercury, out of the skies
Filch the wild spirit of light, and chain him there
To do her will forever.

Look, my friend,
Here is a sign! What is this crystal sphere—
This little bulb of glass I lightly lift,
This iridescent bubble a child might blow
Out of its brazen pipe to hold the sun—
What strange toy is it? In my hand it lies
Cold and inert, its puny artery—
That curling cobweb film—ashen and dead.
But now—a twist or two—let it but touch
The hem, far trailing, of my lady's robe,
And look, the burning life-blood of the stars
Leaps to its heart, and glows against the dark,
Kindling the world.

Even so I touch her garment,
Her servant through the quiet night; and thus
I lay my hand upon the Pleiades
And feel their throb of fire. Grandly she gives
To me unworthy; woman inscrutable,
Scatters her splendors through my darkness, leads me
Far out into the workshop of the worlds.
There I can feel those infinite energies
Our little earth just gnaws at through the ether,
And see the light our sunshine hides. Out there,
Close to the heart of life, I am at peace.

THE BRIDGE

J. Redwood Anderson

Here, with one leap,
The bridge that spans the cutting; on its back
The load
Of the main-road,
And under it the railway-track.

Into the plains they sweep,
Into the solitary plains asleep,
The flowing lines, the parallel lines of steel—
Fringed with their narrow grass,
Into the plains they pass,
The flowing lines, like arms of mute appeal.

A cry
Prolonged across the earth—a call
To the remote horizons and the sky;
The whole east rushes down them
with its light,
And the whole west receives them,
with its pall
Of stars and night—
The flowing lines, the parallel lines of
steel.

And with the fall
Of darkness, see! the red,
Bright anger of the signal, where it
flares
Like a huge eye that stares
On some hid danger in the dark ahead.
A twang of wire—unseen
The signal drops; and now, instead
Of a red eye, a green.

Out of the silence grows
An iron thunder—grows, and roars,
and sweeps,
Menacing! The plain
Suddenly leaps,
Startled, from its repose—
Alert and listening. Now, from the
gloom
Of the soft distance, loom
Three lights and, over them, a brush
Of tawny flame and flying spark—
Three pointed lights that rush,
Monstrous, upon the cringing dark.

And nearer, nearer rolls the sound,
Louder the throb and roar of wheels,
The shout of speed, the shriek of steam;
The sloping bank,
Cut into flashing squares, gives back
the clank
And grind of metal, while the ground
Shudders and the bridge reels—
As, with a scream,
The train,
A rage of smoke, a laugh of fire,
A lighted anguish of desire,
A dream
Of gold and iron, of sound and flight,
Tumultuous roars across the night.

The train roars past—and, with a cry,
Drowned in a flying howl of wind,
Half-stifled in the smoke and blind,
The plain,
Shaken, exultant, unconfined,
Rises, flows on, and follows, and
sweeps by,
Shrieking, to lose itself in distance and
the sky.

THE STEAM SHOVEL

EUNICE TIETJENS

Beneath my window in a city street
A monster lairs, a creature huge and
grim
And only half believed: the strength
of him—
Steel-strung and fit to meet
The strength of earth—
Is mighty as men's dreams that con-
quer force.
Steam belches from him. He is the
new birth
Of old Behemoth, late-sprung from
the source
Whence Grendel sprang, and all the
monster clan
Dead for an age, now born again of
man.

The iron head,
Set on a monstrous, jointed neck,
Glides here and there, lifts, settles on
the red
Moist floor, with nose dropped in the
dirt, at beck

Of some incredible control.
He snorts, and pauses couchant for a space,
Then slowly lifts, and tears the gaping hole
Yet deeper in earth's flank. A sudden race
Of loosened earth and pebbles trickles there
Like blood-drops in a wound.
But he, the monster, swings his load around—
Weightless it seems as air.
His mammoth jaw
Drops widely open with a rasping sound,
And all the red earth vomits from his maw.

O thwarted monster, born at man's decree,
A lap-dog dragon, eating from his hand
And doomed to fetch and carry at command,
Have you no longing ever to be free?
In warm, electric days to run a-muck,
Ranging like some mad dinosaur,
Your fiery heart at war
With this strange world, the city's restless ruck,
Where all drab things that toil, save you alone,
Have life;
And you the semblance only, and the strife?
Do you not yearn to rip the roots of stone
Of these great piles men build,
And hurl them down with shriek of shattered steel,
Scorning your own sure doom, so you may feel,
You too, the lust with which your fathers killed?
Or is your soul in very deed so tame,
The blood of Grendel watered to a gruel,
That you are well content
With heart of flame
Thus placidly to chew your cud of fuel
And toil in peace for man's aggrandizement?

Poor helpless creature of a half-grown god,
Blind of yourself and impotent!
At night,
When your forerunners, sprung from quicker sod,
Would range through primal woods, hot on the scent,
Or wake the stars with amorous delight,
You stand, a soiled, unwieldy mass of steel,
Black in the arc-light, modern as your name,
Dead and unsouled and trite;
Till I must feel
A quick creator's pity for your shame:
That man, who made you and who gave so much,
Yet cannot give the last transforming touch;
That with the work he cannot give the wage—
For day, no joy of night,
For toil, no ecstasy of primal rage.

CHICAGO

Carl Sandburg

Hog-Butcher for the World,
Tool-maker, Stacker of Wheat,
Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight-handler;
Stormy, husky, brawling,
City of the Big Shoulders:

They tell me you are wicked and I
believe them, for I have seen
your painted women under the
gas lamps luring the farm boys.
And they tell me you are crooked, and
I answer, Yes, it is true I have
seen the gunman kill and go free
to kill again.
And they tell me you are brutal and
my reply is, On the faces of
women and children I have seen
the marks of wanton hunger.
And having answered so I turn once
more to those who sneer at this
my city, and I give them back
the sneer and say to them:
Come and show me another city with
lifted head singing so proud to be
alive and coarse and strong and
cunning.
Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil
of piling job on job, here is a tall
bold slugger set vivid against the
little soft cities;
Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping
for action, cunning as a savage
pitted against the wilderness,
Bareheaded,
Shoveling,
Wrecking,
Planning,
Building, breaking, rebuilding,
Under the smoke, dust all over his
mouth, laughing with white
teeth,
Under the terrible burden of destiny
laughing as a young man laughs,
Laughing even as an ignorant fighter
laughs who has never lost a
battle,
Bragging and laughing that under his
wrist is the pulse, and under his
ribs the heart of the people,
Laughing!
Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling
laughter of youth; half-naked,
sweating, proud to be Hog-
butcher, Tool-maker, Stacker of
Wheat, Player with Railroads,
and Freight-handler to the Na-
tion.

BROADWAY

HERMANN HAGEDORN

How like the stars are these white,
nameless faces—
These far innumerable burning
coals!
This pale procession out of stellar
spaces,
This Milky Way of souls!
Each in its own bright nebulæ en-
furled,
Each face, dear God, a world!

I fling my gaze out through the silent
night:
In those far stars, what gardens,
what high halls,
Has mortal yearning built for its
delight,
What chasms and what walls?
What quiet mansions where a soul
may dwell?
What heaven and what hell?

PICCADILLY

EZRA POUND

Beautiful, tragical faces—
Ye that were whole, and are so sunken;
And, O ye vile, ye that might have
been loved,
That are so sodden and drunken,
Who hath forgotten you?

O wistful, fragile faces, few out of
many!

The crass, the coarse, the brazen,
God knows I cannot pity them, perhaps, as I should do;
But oh, ye delicate, wistful faces,
Who hath forgotten you?

THE PIED PIPER

Never before have four hundred million rats followed the lure of the shrill pipe of the rat-catcher.
Nicolai, *Biology of War*

WILLIAM ELLERY LEONARD

The huge Pied Piper, in a giant dance,
Began his piping on the fields of France.
The huge Pied Piper, with a fife of steel,
Danced through the nations, toe and heel.
Four crazed years, under winds and the moon,
The Millions followed in a jigging rigadoon.

For his legs were hosed in stripèd bands,
And his sleeves were stripèd to the fingering hands,
And his cape was stripèd to his piping throat,
And the stripèd cape fluttered to step and note . . .
Stripes up and down, and left and right . . .
Red, green, yellow, black, blue, white . . .
Speckled between with star and crest—
But the red stripes O! they outnumbered the rest.
And when failed the lure of his garments pied,
He juggled new bunting from his vest inside.
So four crazed years, under winds and the moon,
The Millions followed in a jigging rigadoon.

With a fife of steel to puckered lips,
And two cheeks puffing for his fingertips,
He shrilled each tune of the lure of war,
And danced each measure of his repertoire:
He piped and he jigged of fear and hate,
Of love of country and glory of state;
And he piped of God and he piped of man—
This giant Jester, this Charlatan.
And for those who loathed his piping shrill
He piped a tune more alluring still:
"Then hurry to my piping, more than ever,
To *end* my piping, now or never!"
And four crazed years, under winds and the moon,
The Millions followed in a jigging rigadoon.

And the few still slack, as he flung pied cape,
And the few still slack, as he piped his jape,
O the few still slack, as each million reels,
Jigging to the river, behind his heels,
They whipped or they hanged to bar or tree,
And passed with the Piper down the lea . . .

To a red, red river, all the host,—
And the Piper walked, like a shadow or ghost . . .
And the Piper walked, like Christ on the sea
In the sunset-storm of Galilee . . .
And he danced on the waters, to his latest tune,
And the millions perished in a jigging rigadoon.

BATTLE

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON

THE GOING

He's gone.
I do not understand.
I only know
That as he turned to go
And waved his hand,
In his young eyes a sudden glory shone:
And I was dazzled by a sunset glow,
And he was gone.

HIT

Out of the sparkling sea
I drew my tingling body clear, and lay
On a low ledge the livelong summer day,
Basking, and watching lazily
White sails in Falmouth Bay.

My body seemed to burn
Salt in the sun that drenched it through and through,
Till every particle glowed clean and new
And slowly seemed to turn
To lucent amber in a world of blue. . .

I felt a sudden wrench—
A trickle of warm blood—
And found that I was sprawling in the mud
Among the dead men in the trench.

BACK

They ask me where I've been,
And what I've done and seen.
But what can I reply
Who know it wasn't I,
But someone, just like me,
Who went across the sea
And with my head and hands
Slew men in foreign lands . . .
Though I must bear the blame
Because he bore my name.

THE QUESTION

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON

I wonder if the old cow died or not,
Gey bad she was the night I left, and sick.
Dick reckoned she would mend. He knows a lot—
At least he fancies so himself, does Dick.

Dick knows a lot. But maybe I did wrong
To leave the cow to him, and come away.
Over and over like a silly song
These words keep humming in my head all day.

And all I think of, as I face the foe
And take my lucky chance of being shot,
Is this—that if I'm hit, I'll never know
Till Doomsday if the old cow died or not.

BELGIUM

La Belgique ne regrette rien

EDITH WHARTON

Not with her ruined silver spires,
Not with her cities shamed and rent,
Perish the imperishable fires
That shape the homestead from the tent.

Wherever men are staunch and free,
There shall she keep her fearless state,
And, homeless, to great nations be
The home of all that makes them great.

REFUGEES

Belgium—1914

GRACE HAZARD CONKLING

"Mother, the poplars cross the moon;
The road runs on, so white and far,
We shall not reach the city soon:
Oh, tell me where we are!"

"Have patience, patience, little son,
And we shall find the way again:
(God show me the untraveled one!
God give me rest from men!)"

"Mother, you did not tell me why
You hurried so to come away.
I saw big soldiers riding by;
I should have liked to stay."

"Hush, little man, and I will sing
Just like a soldier, if I can—
They have a song for everything.
Listen, my little man!

"This is the soldiers' marching song:
We'll play this is the village street—"
"Yes, but this road is very long,
And stones have hurt my feet."

"Nay, little pilgrim, up with you!
And yonder field shall be the town.
I'll show you how the soldiers do
Who travel up and down.

"They march and sing and march again,
Not minding all the stones and dust:
They go, (God grant me rest from men!)
Forward, because they must."

"Mother, I want to go to sleep,"
"No darling! Here is bread to eat!
(O God, if thou couldst let me weep,
Or heal my broken feet!)"

EDITH CAVELL

GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY

The world hath its own dead; great motions start
In human breasts, and make for them a place
In that hushed sanctuary of the race
Where every day men come, kneel, and depart.
Of them, O English nurse, henceforth thou art
A name to pray on, and to all a face
Of household consecration; such His grace
Whose universal dwelling is the heart,
O gentle hands that soothed the soldier's brow
And knew no service save of Christ's the Lord!
Thy country now is all humanity.
How like a flower thy womanhood doth show
In the harsh scything of the German sword.
And beautifies the world that saw it die!

THE DEAD

RUPERT BROOKE

Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!
There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,
But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.
These laid the world away; poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be
Of work and joy, and that unhoped serene,
That men call age; and those who would have been,
Their sons, they gave, their immortality.

Blow, bugles, blow! They brought us, for our dearth,
Holiness, lacked so long, and Love, and Pain.
Honour has come back, as a king, to earth,
And paid his subjects with a royal wage;
And Nobleness walks in our ways again;
And we have come into our heritage.

A PRAYER FOR THE OLD COURAGE

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

Still let us go the way of beauty; go
The way of loveliness; still let us know
Those paths that lead where Pan and Daphne run,
Where roses prosper in the summer sun.
The earth may rock with War. Still is there peace
In many a place to give the heart release
From this too-vibrant pain that drives men mad.
Let us go back to the old loves we had.

Let us go back, to keep alive the gleam,
To cherish the immortal, Godlike dream;
Not as poor cravens flying from the fight,
But as sad children seeking the clean light.

Oh, doubly precious now is solitude;
Thrice dear yon quiet star above the wood,
Since panic and the sundering shock of War
Have laid in ruins all we hungered for.

Brave soldiers of the spirit, guard ye well
Mountain and fort and massive citadel;
But keep ye white forever—keep Ye whole
The battlements of dream within the soul!

THE POET IN THE DESERT

Extracts from the Prologue

CHARLES ERSKINE SCOTT WOOD

I have come into the Desert because my soul is athirst as the Desert is athirst;
My soul which is the soul of all; universal, not different.

We are athirst for the waters which
make beautiful the path
And entice the grass, the willows and
poplars,
So that in the heat of the day we may
lie in a cool shadow,
Soothed as by the hands of quiet
women, listening to the discourse
of running waters as the voices
of women, exchanging the con-
fidences of love.

. . . . . .

The mountains afar girdle the Desert
as a zone of amethyst;
Pale, translucent walls of opal,
Girdling the Desert as Life is girt by
Eternity.
They lift their heads high above our
tribulation
Into the azure vault of Time;
Theirs are the airy castles which are
set upon foundations of sap-
phire.
My soul goes out to them as the bird
to her secret nest.
They are the abode of peace.

. . . . . .

The flowers bloom in the Desert
joyously—
They do not weary themselves with
questioning;
They are careless whether they be
seen, or praised.
They blossom unto life perfectly and
unto death perfectly, leaving
nothing unsaid.
They spread a voluptuous carpet for
the feet of the Wind
And to the frolic Breezes which over-
leap them, they whisper:
"Stay a moment, Brother; plunder us
of our passion;
Our day is short, but our beauty is
eternal."

Never have I found a place, or a
season, without beauty.
Neither the sea, where the white
stallions champ their bits and
rear against their bridles,
Nor the Desert, bride of the Sun,
which sits scornful, apart,
Like an unwooed princess, careless,
indifferent.
She spreads her garments, wonderful
beyond estimation,
And embroiders continually her
mantle.
She is a queen, seated on a throne of
gold
In the Hall of Silence.
She insists upon humility.
She insists upon meditation.
She insists that the soul be free.
She requires an answer.
She demands the final reply to
thoughts which cannot be an-
swered.
She lights the sun for a torch
And sets up the great cliffs as
sentinels:
The morning and the evening are
curtains before her chambers.
She displays the stars as her coro-
net.
She is cruel and invites victims,
Restlessly moving her wrists and
ankles,
Which are loaded with sapphires.
Her brown breasts flash with opals.
She slays those who fear her,
But runs her hand lovingly over
the brow of those who know
her,
Soothing with a voluptuous caress.
She is a courtesan, wearing jewels,
Enticing, smiling a bold smile;
Adjusting her brilliant raiment neg-
ligently,

Lying brooding upon her floor which
is richly carpeted;
Her brown thighs beautiful and
naked.
She toys with the dazzelry of her
diadems,
Smiling inscrutably.
She is a nun, withdrawing behind her
veil;
Gray, subdued, silent, mysterious,
meditative; unapproachable.
She is fair as a goddess sitting be-
neath a flowering peach-tree,
beside a clear river.
Her body is tawny with the eagerness
of the Sun
And her eyes are like pools which
shine in deep cañons.
She is beautiful as a swart woman,
with opals at her throat,
Rubies on her wrists and topaz about
her ankles.
Her breasts are like the evening and
the day stars;
She sits upon her throne of light,
proud and silent, indifferent to
her wooers.
The Sun is her servitor, the Stars are
her attendants, running before
her.
She sings a song unto her own
ears, solitary, but it is suffi-
cient—
It is the song of her being. Oh, if I
may sing the song of my being
it will be sufficient.
She is like a jeweled dancer, danc-
ing upon a pavement of
gold;
Dazzling, so that the eyes must be
shaded.
She wears the stars upon her bosom
and braids her hair with the
constellations.
I know the Desert is beautiful, for I
have lain in her arms and she has
kissed me.
I have come to her, that I may know
freedom;
That I may lie upon the breast of the
Mother and breathe the air of
primal conditions.
I have come out from the haunts of
men;
From the struggle of wolves upon a
carcass,
To be melted in Creation's crucible
and be made clean;
To know that the law of Nature is
freedom.

THE HOUSE ON THE HILL

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

They are all gone away,
The House is shut and still,
There is nothing more to say.

Through broken walls and gray
The winds blow bleak and shrill;
They are all gone away,

Nor is there one to-day
To speak them good or ill:
There is nothing more to say.

Why is it then we stray
Around the sunken sill?
They are all gone away.

And our poor fancy-play
For them is wasted skill:
There is nothing more to say.

There is ruin and decay
In the House on the Hill:
They are all gone away,
There is nothing more to say.

PINE-TREES AND THE SKY: EVENING

RUPERT BROOKE

I'd watched the sorrow of the evening sky,
And smelt the sea, and earth, and the warm clover,
And heard the waves, and the sea-gull's mocking cry.

And in them all was only the old cry,
That song they always sing—"The best is over!
You may remember now, and think, and sigh,
O silly lover!"
And I was tired and sick that all was over,
And because I,
For all my thinking, never could recover
One moment of the good hours that were over.
And I was sorry and sick, and wished to die.

Then from the sad west turning wearily,
I saw the pines against the white north sky,
Very beautiful, and still, and bending over
Their sharp black heads against a quiet sky.
And there was peace in them; and I
Was happy, and forgot to play the lover,
And laughed, and did no longer wish to die;
Being glad of you, O pine-trees and the sky!

SUNRISE ON RYDAL WATER

To E. de S.

JOHN DRINKWATER

Come down at dawn from windless hills
Into the valley of the lake,
Where yet a larger quiet fills
The hour, and mist and water make
With rocks and reeds and island boughs
One silence and one element,
Where wonder goes surely as once
It went
By Galilean prows.

Moveless the water and the mist,
Moveless the secret air above,
Hushed, as upon some happy tryst
The poised expectancy of love;
What spirit is it that adores
What mighty presence yet unseen?
What consummation works apace
Between
These rapt enchanted shores?

Never did virgin beauty wake
Devouter to the bridal feast
Than moves this hour upon the lake
In adoration to the east.
Here is the bride a god may know,
The primal will, the young consent,
Till surely upon the appointed mood
Intent
The god shall leap—and, lo,

Over the lake's end strikes the sun—
White, flameless fire; some purity
Thrilling the mist, a splendor won
Out of the world's heart. Let there be

Thoughts, and atonements, and desires,
Proud limbs, and undeliberate tongue;
Where now we move with mortal care
Among
Immortal dews and fires.

So the old mating goes apace,
Wind with the sea, and blood with thought,
Lover with lover; and the grace
Of understanding comes unsought
When stars into the twilight steer,
Or thrushes build among the may,
Or wonder moves between the hills,
And day
Comes up on Rydal mere.

THE FUGITIVE

JOHN FREEMAN

In the hush of early even
The clouds came flocking over,
Till the last wind fell from heaven
And no bird cried.

Darkly the clouds were flocking,
Shadows moved and deepened,
Then paused; the poplar's rocking
Ceased; the light hung still

Like a painted thing, and deadly.
Then from the cloud's side flickered
Sharp lightning, thrusting madly
At the cowering fields.

Thrice the fierce cloud lighten'd,
Down the hill slow thunder trembled;
Day in her cave grew frightened,
Crept away, and died.

DAY THAT I HAVE LOVED

RUPERT BROOKE

Tenderly, day that I have loved, I close your eyes,
And smooth your quiet brow, and fold your thin dead hands.
The grey veils of the half-light deepen; colour dies.
I bear you, a light burden, to the shrouded sands,

Where lies your waiting boat, by wreaths of the sea's making
Mist-garlanded, with all grey weeds of the water crowned.
There you'll be laid, past fear of sleep or hope of waking;
And over the unmoving sea, without a sound,

Faint hands will row you outward, out beyond our sight,
Us with stretched arms and empty eyes on the far-gleaming
And marble sand. . . .
Beyond the shifting cold twilight,
Further than laughter goes, or tears, further than dreaming,
There'll be no port, no dawn-lit islands! But the drear

Waste darkening, and, at length, flame ultimate on the deep.
Oh, the last fire—and you, unkissed, unfriended there!
Oh, the lone way's red ending, and we not there to weep!

(We found you pale and quiet, and strangely crowned with flowers,
Lovely and secret as a child. You came with us,

Came happily, hand in hand with the young dancing hours,
High on the downs at dawn!) Void now and tenebrous,

The grey sands curve before me. . . .
From the inland meadows,
Fragrant of June and clover, floats the dark, and fills
The hollow sea's dead face with little creeping shadows,
And the white silence brims the hollow of the hills.

Close in the nest is folded every weary wing,
Hushed all the joyful voices; and we, who held you dear,
Eastward we turn and homeward, alone, remembering. . . .
Day that I loved, day that I loved, the Night is here!

A HYMN TO NIGHT

MAX MICHELSON

Come, mysterious night;
Descend and nestle to us.

Descend softly on the houses
We built with pride,
Without worship.
Fold them in your veil,
Spill your shadows.

Come over our stores and factories,
Hide our pride—our shame—
With your nebulous wings.

Come down on our cobbled streets:
Unleash your airy hounds.
Come to the sleepers, night;
Light in them your fires.

MY MOON

GORDON BOTTOMLEY

My moon was lit in an hour of lilies;
The apple-trees seemed older than ever.
It rose from matted trees that sever
The oats from the meadow, and woke the fillies
That reared in dew and gleamed with dew
And ran like water and shadow, and cried.
It moistened and veiled the oats yet new,
And seemed to drip long drops of the tide,
Of the mother-sea so lately left.
Feathers of flower were each bereft
Of color and stem, and floated low;
Another lily opened then
And lost a little gold dust; but when
The lime-boughs lifted there seemed to go
Some life of the moon like breath that moves
Or parting glances that flutter and strain—
A ghost with hands the color of doves
And feet the color of rain.

SILVER

WALTER DE LA MARE

Slowly, silently, now the moon
Walks the night in her silver shoon;
This way, and that, she peers, and sees
Silver fruit upon silver trees;
One by one the casements catch
Her beams beneath the silvery patch.
Couched in his kennel, like a log,
With paws of silver sleeps the dog;
From their shadowy cote the white breasts peep

Of doves in a silver-feathered sleep;
A harvest mouse goes scampering by,
With silver claws and a silver eye;
And moveless fish in the water gleam,
By silver reeds in a silver stream.

EASTER

JOYCE KILMER

The air is like a butterfly
With frail blue wings.
The happy earth looks at the sky
And sings.

COLOR IN THE WHEAT

HAMLIN GARLAND

Like liquid gold the wheat field lies,
A marvel of yellow and russet and green,
That ripples and runs, that floats and flies,
With the subtle shadows, the change, the sheen,
That play in the golden hair of a girl,—
A ripple of amber—a flare
Of light sweeping after—a curl
In the hollows like swirling feet
Of fairy waltzers, the colors run
To the western sun
Through the deeps of the ripening wheat.

Broad as the fleckless, soaring sky,
Mysterious, fair as the moon-led sea,
The vast plain flames on the dazzled eye
Under the fierce sun's alchemy.
The slow hawk stoops
To his prey in the deeps;
The sunflower droops
To the lazy wave; the wind sleeps,
Then swirling in dazzling links and loops,
A riot of shadow and shine,
A glory of olive and amber and wine,
To the westering sun the colors run
Through the deeps of the ripening wheat.

* * *

O glorious land! My western land,
Outspread beneath the setting sun!
Once more amid your swells, I stand,
And cross your sod lands dry and dun.
I hear the jocund calls of men
Who sweep amid the ripened grain
With swift, stern reapers, once again.
The evening splendor floods the plain,
The crickets' chime
Makes pauseless rhyme,
And toward the sun
The colors run
Before the wind's feet
In the wheat!

UNDER THE HARVEST MOON

CARL SANDBURG

Under the harvest moon,
When the soft silver
Drips shimmering
Over the garden nights,
Death, the gray mocker,
Comes and whispers to you
As a beautiful friend
Who remembers.

Under the summer roses
When the flagrant crimson
Lurks in the dusk
Of the wild red leaves,
Love, with little hands,
Comes and touches you
With a thousand memories,
And asks you
Beautiful, unanswerable questions.

NOCTURNE IN A DESERTED BRICKYARD

CARL SANDBURG

Stuff of the moon
Runs on the lapping sand
Out to the longest shadows.
Under the curving willows,
And round the creep of the wave line,
Fluxions of yellow and dusk on the waters
Make a wide dreaming pansy of an old pond in the night.

FOG

CARL SANDBURG

The fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

LOST

CARL SANDBURG

Desolate and lone
All night long on the lake
Where fog trails and mist creeps,
The whistle of a boat
Calls and cries unendingly,
Like some lost child
In tears and trouble
Hunting the harbor's breast
And the harbor's eyes.

WATER LILIES

SARA TEASDALE

If you have forgotten water-lilies floating
On a dark lake among mountains in the afternoon shade,
If you have forgotten their wet, sleepy fragrance,
Then you can return and not be afraid.

But if you remember, then turn away forever
To the plains and the prairies where pools are far apart,
There you will not come at dusk on closing water lilies,
And the shadow of mountains will not fall on your heart.

VERY NEARLY!

QUEENIE SCOTT-HOPPER

I never *quite* saw fairy-folk
A-dancing in the glade,
Where, just beyond the hollow oak,
Their broad green rings are laid:
But, while behind that oak I hid,
One day I very nearly did!

I never *quite* saw mermaids rise
Above the twilight sea,
When sands, left wet, 'neath sunset skies,
Are blushing rosily:
But—all alone, those rocks amid—
One night I very nearly did!

I never *quite* saw Goblin Grim
Who haunts our lumber room
And pops his head above the rim
Of that oak chest's deep gloom:
But once—when Mother raised the lid—
I very, very nearly did!

THE ELF AND THE DORMOUSE

OLIVER HERFORD

Under a toadstool crept a wee Elf,
Out of the rain to shelter himself.

Under the toadstool, sound asleep,
Sat a big Dormouse all in a heap.

Trembled the wee Elf, frightened and
yet
Fearing to fly away lest he get wet.

To the next shelter—maybe a mile!
Sudden the wee Elf smiled a wee
smile.

Tugged till the toadstool toppled in
two.
Holding it over him, gaily he flew.

Soon he was safe home, dry as could
be.
Soon woke the Dormouse— "Good
gracious me!

"Where is my toadstool?" loud he
lamented.
—And that's how umbrellas first were
invented.

CHECK

JAMES STEPHENS

The night was creeping on the ground;
She crept and did not make a sound
Until she reached the tree, and then
She covered it, and stole again
Along the grass beside the wall.

I heard the rustle of her shawl
As she threw blackness everywhere
Upon the sky and ground and air,
And in the room where I was hid:
But no matter what she did
To everything that was without,
She could not put my candle out.

So I stared at the night, and she
Stared back solemnly at me.

A VISIT FROM ABROAD

JAMES STEPHENS

A speck went blowing up against the
sky
As little as a leaf: then it drew near
And broadened.—"It's a bird," said I,
And fetched my bow and arrows.
It was queer!
It grew from up a speck into a blot,
And squattered past a cloud; then it
flew down
All crumply, and waggled such a lot
I thought the thing would fall.—
It was a brown
Old carpet where a man was sitting
snug
Who, when he reached the ground,
began to sew
A big hole in the middle of the rug,
And kept on peeping everywhere to
know
Who might be coming—then he gave
a twist
And flew away. . . . I fired at
him but missed.

THREE CINQUAINS

ADELAIDE CRAPSEY

NOVEMBER NIGHT

Listen . . .
With faint dry sound,
Like steps of passing ghosts,
The leaves, frost-crisp'd, break from
the trees
And fall.

TRIAD

These be
Three silent things:
The falling snow . . . the hour
Before the dawn . . . the mouth
of one
Just dead.

THE WARNING

Just now,
Out of the strange
Still dusk . . . . as strange, as still . . .
A white moth flew. Why am I grown
So cold?

A DEAD HARVEST

In Kensington Gardens

ALICE MEYNELL

Along the graceless grass of town
They rake the rows of red and brown,—
Dead leaves, unlike the rows of hay
Delicate, touched with gold and grey,
Raked long ago and far away.

A narrow silence in the park,
Between the lights a narrow dark.
One street rolls on the north; and one,
Muffled, upon the south doth run;
Amid the mist the work is done.

A futile crop! for it the fire
Smoulders, and, for a stack, a pyre.
So go the town's lives on the breeze,
Even as the sheddings of the trees;
Bosom nor barn is filled with these.

THE WEST WIND

JOHN MASEFIELD

It's a warm wind, the west wind, full of birds' cries;
I never hear the west wind but tears are in my eyes.
For it comes from the west lands, the old brown hills,
And April's in the west wind, and daffodils.

It's a fine land, the west land, for hearts as tired as mine.
Apple orchards blossom there, and the air's like wine.
There is cool green grass there, where men may lie at rest,
And the thrushes are in song there, fluting from the nest.

"Will you not come home, brother? You have been long away.
It's April, and blossom time, and white is the spray:
And bright is the sun, brother, and warm is the rain,
Will you not come home, brother, home to us again?

"The young corn is green, brother, where the rabbits run;
It's blue sky, and white clouds, and warm rain and sun.
It's song to a man's soul, brother, fire to a man's brain,
To hear the wild bees and see the merry spring again.

"Larks are singing in the west, brother, above the green wheat,
So will you not come home, brother, and rest your tired feet?
I've a balm for bruised hearts, brother, sleep for aching eyes."
Says the warm wind, the west wind, full of birds' cries.

It's the white road westwards is the road I must tread
To the green grass, the cool grass, and rest for heart and head,
To the violets and the brown brooks and the thrushes' song
In the fine land, the west land, the land where I belong.

John Masefield

MONOTONE

CARL SANDBURG

The monotone of the rain is beautiful,
And the sudden rise and slow relapse
Of the long multitudinous rain.

The sun on the hills is beautiful,
Or a captured sunset sea-flung
Bannered with fire and gold.

A face I know is beautiful—
With fire and gold of sky and sea,
And the peace of long warm rain.

RAIN IN THE DESERT

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

The huge red-buttressed mesa over yonder
Is merely a far-off temple where the sleepy sun is burning
Its altar fires of pinyon and toyon for the day.

The old priests sleep, white-shrouded;
Their pottery whistles lie beside them, the prayer-sticks closely feathered.
On every mummied face there glows a smile.

The sun is rolling slowly
Beneath the sluggish folds of the sky-serpents,
Coiling, uncoiling, blue black, sparked with fires.

The old dead priests
Feel in the thin dried earth that is heaped about them,
Above the smell of scorching, oozing pinyon,
The acrid smell of rain.

And now the showers
Surround the mesa like a troop of silver dancers:
Shaking their rattles, stamping, chanting, roaring,
Whirling, extinguishing the last red wisp of light.

LITTLE PAGAN RAIN SONG

FRANCES SHAW

In the dark and peace of my final bed,
The wet grass waving above my head,
At rest from love, at rest from pain,
I lie and listen to the rain.

Falling, softly falling,
Song of my soul that is free;
Song of my soul that has not forgot
The sleeping body of me.

When quiet and calm and straight I lie,
High in the air my soul rides by:
Shall I await thee, soul, in vain?
Hark to the answer in the rain.

Falling, softly falling,
Song of my soul that is free;
Song of my soul that will not forget
The sleeping body of me.

SUMMER HAIL

EDITH WYATT

Once the heavens' gabled door
Opened: down a stabled floor,
Down the thunders, something galloped far and wide,

Glancing far and fleet
Down the silver street—
And I knew of nothing, nothing else beside.
Pitty patty polt—
Shoe the wild colt!
Here a nail! There a nail!
Pitty patty polt!

Good and badness, die away
Strength and swiftness down the day,
Dapple happy down my glancing silver street!
Oh, the touch of summer cold!—
Beauty swinging quick and bold,
Dipping, dappling where the distant roof-tops meet!
Pitty patty polt!
Shoe the wild colt!

Listen, dusty care:
Through a magic air,
Once I watched the way of perfect splendor ride,
Swishing far and gray,
Buoyant and gay—
And I knew of nothing, nothing else beside.
Good and badness, go your ways,
Vanish far and fleet.
Strength and swiftness run my days,
Down my silver street.
Little care, forevermore
Be you lesser than before.
Mighty frozen rain,
Come! oh, come again!
Let the heavens' door be rended
With the touch of summer cold—
Dappling hoof-beats clatter splendid,
Infinitely gay and bold!
Pitty patty polt—
Shoe the wild colt!
Here a nail and there a nail!
Pitty patty polt!

Once the heavens' gabled door
Opened: down the stabled floor,
Down the thunders something galloped wide and far;
Something dappled far and fleet,
Glancing down my silver street,
And I saw the ways of life just as they are.
Pitty patty polt—
Shoe the wild colt!
Here a nail! There a nail!
Pitty patty polt!

WHO LOVES THE RAIN

Frances Shaw

Who loves the rain
And loves his home,
And looks on life with quiet eyes,
Him will I follow through the storm;
And at his hearth-fire keep me warm;
Nor hell nor heaven shall that soul surprise,
Who loves the rain,
And loves his home,
And looks on life with quiet eyes.

RAIN REVERY

Percy MacKaye

In the lone of night by the pattering tree
I sat alone with Poetry—
With Poetry, my old shy friend,
And his tenuous shadow seemed to blend—
Beyond the lampshine on the sill—
With the mammoth shadow of the hill,
And his breath fell soft on the pool-dark pane
With the murmurous, murmuring muffled hoof
Of the rain, the rain,
The rain on the roof.

In the vast of night and its vacancy
I prayed aloud to Poetry,
And his luminous eyes grew large and dim
As my heart-pulse quickened to question him;
For out of that rumbling rhymeless rune
He only might know, by a sense atune
To unravel the anguish, and render vain
The remorseless will that wove the woof
Of the rain, the rain,
The rain on the roof.

So I cried: "What mute conspiracy
Have you made with the night, O Poetry?
Lover and friend of my warm doorway,
Do you crouch there too on the storm-soaked clay?
Did you creep indoors when that gust of damp
Raised the dead moon-moths round my lamp
And the wan flame guttered?—Hark, again!
Do *you* ride there—so close, so aloof—
With the rain, the rain,
The rain on the roof?

"Ah, what of the rapture and melody
We might have wrought, dear Poetry!
Imagined tower and dream-built shrine,
Must they crumble in dark like this pale lampshine?
Our dawn-flecked meadows lyric-shrill,
Shall they lie as dumb as the gloom-drenched hill?
Our song-voiced lovers!—Shall none remain?"—
Under the galloping, gusty hoof
Answered the rain, rain
Rain on the roof.

ON THE PORCH

HARRIET MONROE

As I lie roofed in, screened in,
From the pattering rain,
The summer rain—
As I lie
Snug and dry,
And hear the birds complain:

Oh, billow on billow,
Oh, roar on roar,
Over me wash
The seas of war.
Over me—down—down—
Lunges and plunges
The huge gun with its one blind eye,
The armored train,
And, swooping out of the sky,
The aeroplane.

Down—down—
The army proudly swinging
Under gay flags,
The glorious dead heaped up like rags,
A church with bronze bells ringing,
A city all towers,
Gardens of lovers and flowers,
The round world swinging
In the light of the sun:
All broken, undone,
All down—under
Black surges of thunder . . .

Oh, billow on billow
Oh, roar on roar,
Over me wash
The seas of war . . .

As I lie roofed in, screened in,
From the pattering rain,
The summer rain—
As I lie
Snug and dry,
And hear the birds complain.

THE HARP OF THE WIND

Frances Shaw

My house stands high—
Where the harp of the wind
Plays all day,
Plays all night;
And the city light
Is far away.

Where hangs the harp that the winds play?—
High in the air—
Over the sea?

The long straight streets of the far-away town,
Where the lines of light go sweeping down,
Are the strings of its minstrelsy.

And the harp of the wind
Gives to the wind
A song of the city's tears;
Thin and faint, the cry of a child,
Plaint of the soul unreconciled,
A song of the passing years.

STORM

Max Michelson

Storm,
Wild one,
Take me in your whirl,
In your giddy reel,
In your shot-like leaps and flights.
Hear me call—stop and hear.
I know you, blusterer; I know you, wild one—
I know your mysterious call.

LANDSCAPES

Louis Untermeyer

The rain was over, and the brilliant air
Made every little blade of grass appear
Vivid and startling—everything was there
With sharpened outlines, eloquently clear,
As though one saw it in a crystal sphere.

The rusty sumac with its struggling spires;
The golden-rod with all its million fires
(A million torches swinging in the wind);
A single poplar, marvellously thinned,
Half like a naked boy, half like a sword;
Clouds, like the haughty banners of the Lord;
A group of pansies with their shrewish faces,
Little old ladies cackling over laces;
The quaint, unhurried road that curved so well;
The prim petunias with their rich, rank smell;
The lettuce-birds, the creepers in the field—
How bountifully were they all revealed!
How arrogantly each one seemed to thrive—
So frank and strong, so radiantly alive!

And over all the morning-minded earth
There seemed to spread a sharp and kindling mirth,
Piercing the stubborn stones until I saw
The toad-face heaven without shame or awe,
The ant confront the stars, and every weed
Grow proud as though it bore a royal seed;
While all the things that die and decompose
Sent forth their bloom as richly as the rose. . . .
Oh, what a liberal power that made them thrive
And keep the very dirt that died, alive.

And now I saw the slender willow-tree
No longer calm or drooping listlessly,
Letting its languid branches sway and fall
As though it danced in some sad ritual;
But rather like a young, athletic girl,
Fearless and gay, her hair all out of curl,
And flying in the wind—her head thrown back,
Her arms flung up, her garments flowing slack,
And all her rushing spirits running over. . . .
What made a sober tree seem such a rover—
Or made the staid and stalwart apple-trees,
That stood for years knee-deep in velvet peace,
Turn all their fruit to little worlds of flame,
And burn the trembling orchard there below?
What lit the heart of every golden-glow—
Oh, why was nothing weary, dull, or tame? . . .
Beauty it was, and keen, compassionate mirth
That drives the vast and energetic earth.

And, with abrupt and visionary eyes,
I saw the huddled tenements arise.
Here where the merry clover danced and shone
Sprang agonies of iron and of stone;
There, where green Silence laughed or stood enthralled,
Cheap music blared and evil alleys sprawled.
The roaring avenues, the shrieking mills;
Brothels and prisons on those kindly hills—
The menace of these things swept over me;
A threatening, unconquerable sea. . . .

A stirring landscape and a generous earth!
Freshening courage and benevolent mirth—
And then the city, like a hideous sore. . . .
Good God, and what is all this beauty for?

TREES

Joyce Kilmer

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

THE POPLAR

RICHARD ALDINGTON

Why do you always stand there shivering
Between the white stream and the road?

The people pass through the dust
On bicycles, in carts, in motor-cars;
The waggoners go by at dawn;
The lovers walk on the grass path at night.

Stir from your roots, walk, poplar!
You are more beautiful than they are.

I know that the white wind loves you,
Is always kissing you and turning up
The white lining of your green petticoat.
The sky darts through you like blue rain,
And the grey rain drips on your flanks
And loves you.
And I have seen the moon
Slip his silver penny into your pocket
As you straightened your hair;
And the white mist curling and hesitating
Like a bashful lover about your knees.

I know you, poplar;
I have watched you since I was ten.
But if you had a little real love,
A little strength,
You would leave your nonchalant idle lovers
And go walking down the white road
Behind the waggoners.

There are beautiful beeches
Down beyond the hill.
Will you always stand there shivering?

THE PINE AT TIMBER-LINE

HARRIET MONROE

What has bent you,
Warped and twisted you,
Torn and crippled you?—
What has embittered you,
O lonely tree?

You search the rocks for a footing, dragging scrawny roots;
You bare your thin breast to the storms, and fling out wild arms behind you;
You throw back your witch-like head, with wisps of hair stringing the wind.

You fight with the snows,
You rail and shriek at the tempests.
Old before your time, you challenge the cold stars.

Be still, be satisfied!
Stand straight like your brothers in the valley,
The soft green valley of summer down below.

Why front the endless winter of the peak?
Why seize the lightning in your riven hands?
Why cut the driven wind and shriek aloud?

Why tarry here?

BIRCHES

ROBERT FROST

When I see birches bend to left and right
Across the line of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay.
Ice-storms do that. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.
Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells
Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust—
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.
They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,
And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed
So low for long, they never right themselves:
You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair
Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.
But I was going to say when Truth broke in
With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm,
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out and in to fetch the cows—
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
Whose only play was what he found himself,
Summer or winter, and could play alone.
One by one he subdued his father's trees
By riding them down over and over again
Until he took the stiffness out of them,
And not one but hung limp, not one was left
For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not launching out too soon
And so not carrying the tree away
Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
To the top branches, climbing carefully

With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim.
Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,
Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.
So was I once myself a swinger of birches;
And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed across it open.
I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.
May no fate wilfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

LEAVES

SARA TEASDALE

One by one, like leaves from a tree,
All my faiths have forsaken me;
But the stars above my head
Burn in white and delicate red,
And beneath my feet the earth
Brings the sturdy grass to birth.
I who was content to be
But a silken-singing tree,
But a rustle of delight
In the wistful heart of night,
I have lost the leaves that knew
Touch of rain and weight of dew.
Blinded by a leafy crown
I looked neither up nor down—
But the little leaves that die
Have left me room to see the sky;
Now for the first time I know
Stars above and earth below.

WHEN THE LEAVES FALL

JAMES STEPHENS

When the leaves fall off the trees
  Everybody walks on them:
Once they had a time of ease
High above, and every breeze
  Used to stay and talk to them.

Then they were so debonair
  As they fluttered up and down;
Dancing in the sunny air,
Dancing without knowing there
  Was a gutter in the town.

Now they have no place at all!
  All the home that they can find
Is a gutter by a wall,
And the wind that waits their fall
  Is an apache of a wind.

THE BIRD

MAX MICHELSON

From a branch
The bird called:

I hold your heart!
I wash it
And scour it
With bits of song
Like pebbles;
And your doubts
And your sorrows
Fall—drip, drip, drip—
Like dirty water.
I pipe to it
In little notes
Of life clear as a pool,
And of death
Clearer still;
And I swoop with it
In the blue
And in the nest
Of a cloud.

THE BIRD AT DAWN

HAROLD MONRO

What I saw was just one eye
In the dawn as I was going:
A bird can carry all the sky
In that little button glowing.

Never in my life I went
So deep into the firmament.

He was standing on a tree,
All in blossom overflowing;
And he purposely looked hard at me,
At first, as if to question merrily:
"Where are you going?"
But next some far more serious thing
to say;
I could not answer, could not look
away.

Oh, that hard, round, and so distracting eye:
Little mirror of all sky!—
And then the after-song another tree
Held, and sent radiating back on me.

If no man had invented human word,
And a bird-song had been
The only way to utter what we mean,
What would we men have heard,
What understood, what seen,
Between the trills and pauses, in between
The singing and the silence of a bird?

STUPIDITY STREET

RALPH HODGSON

I saw with open eyes
Singing birds sweet
Sold in the shops
For the people to eat,
Sold in the shops of
Stupidity Street.

I saw in vision
The worm in the wheat,
And in the shops nothing
For people to eat;
Nothing for sale in
Stupidity Street.

THE FIFTEEN ACRES

JAMES STEPHENS

I cling and swing
On a branch, or sing
Through the cool, clear hush of
Morning, O:
Or fling my wing
On the air, and bring

To sleepier birds a warning, O:
That the night's in flight,
And the sun's in sight,
And the dew is the grass adorning, O:
And the green leaves swing
As I sing, sing, sing,
Up by the river,
Down the dell,
To the little wee nest,
Where the big tree fell,
So early in the morning, O.

I flit and twit
In the sun for a bit
When his light so bright is shining, O:
Or sit and fit
My plumes, or knit
Straw plaits for the nest's nice lining, O:
And she with glee
Shows unto me
Underneath her wings reclining, O:
And I sing that Peg
Has an egg, egg, egg,
Up by the oat-field,
Round the mill,
Past the meadow,
Down the hill,
So early in the morning, O.

I stoop and swoop
On the air, or loop
Through the trees, and then go soaring, O:
To group with a troop
On the gusty poop
While the wind behind is roaring, O:
I skim and swim
By a cloud's red rim
And up to the azure flooring, O:
And my wide wings drip
As I slip, slip, slip
Down through the rain-drops,
Back where Peg
Broods in the nest
On the little white egg,
So early in the morning, O.

MUSIC

Walter De la Mare

When music sounds, gone is the earth I know,
And all her lovely things even lovelier grow;
Her flowers in vision flame, her forest trees
Lift burdened branches, stilled with ecstasies.

When music sounds, out of the water rise
Naiads whose beauty dims my waking eyes,
Rapt in strange dream burns each enchanted face,
With solemn echoing stirs their dwelling-place.

When music sounds, all that I was I am
Ere to this haunt of brooding dust I came;
And from Time's woods break into distant song
The swift-winged hours, as I hasten along.

THE BARREL-ORGAN

Alfred Noyes

There's a barrel-organ carolling across a golden street
In the City as the sun sinks low;
And the music's not immortal; but the world has made it sweet
And fulfilled it with the sunset glow;

And it pulses through the pleasures
of the City and the pain
That surround the singing organ
like a large eternal light;
And they've given it a glory and a
part to play again
In the Symphony that rules the
day and night.

And now it's marching onward through
the realms of old romance,
And trolling out a fond familiar tune,
And now it's roaring cannon down to
fight the King of France,
And now it's prattling softly to the
moon.
And all around the organ there's a sea
without a shore
Of human joys and wonders and
regrets;
To remember and to recompense the
music evermore
For what the cold machinery
forgets. . . .

Yes; as the music changes,
Like a prismatic glass,
It takes the light and ranges
Through all the moods that
pass;
Dissects the common carnival
Of passions and regrets,
And gives the world a glimpse of all
The colours it forgets.

And there *La Traviata* sighs
Another sadder song;
And there *Il Trovatore* cries
A tale of deeper wrong;
And bolder knights to battle go
With sword and shield and
lance,
Than ever here on earth below
Have whirled into—a dance!

Go down to Kew in lilac-time, in
lilac-time, in lilac-time;
Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it
isn't far from London!)
And you shall wander hand in hand
with love in summer's wonder-
land;
Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it
isn't far from London!)

The cherry-trees are seas of bloom
and soft perfume and sweet
perfume,
The cherry-trees are seas of bloom
(and oh, so near to London!)
And there they say, when dawn is
high and all the world's a blaze of
sky
The cuckoo, though he's very shy,
will sing a song for London.

The nightingale is rather rare and yet
they say you'll hear him there
At Kew, at Kew in lilac-time (and
oh, so near to London!)
The linnet and the throstle, too, and
after dark the long halloo
And golden-eyed *tu-whit, tu-whoo* of
owls that ogle London.

For Noah hardly knew a bird of any
kind that isn't heard
At Kew, at Kew in lilac-time (and
oh, so near to London!)
And when the rose begins to pout and
all the chestnut spires are out
You'll hear the rest, without a
doubt, all chorusing for Lon-
don:—

Come down to Kew in lilac-time, in
lilac-time, in lilac-time;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time
(it isn't far from London!)

And you shall wander hand in hand
with love in summer's wonder-
land;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time
(it isn't far from London!)

And then the troubadour begins to thrill the golden street,
In the City as the sun sinks low;
And in all the gaudy busses there are scores of weary feet
Marking time, sweet time, with a dull mechanic beat,
And a thousand hearts are plunging to a love they'll never meet,
Through the meadows of the sunset, through the poppies and the wheat,
In the land where the dead dreams go.

Verdi, Verdi, when you wrote *Il Trovatore* did you dream
Of the City when the sun sinks low,
Of the organ and the monkey and the many-coloured stream
On the Piccadilly pavement, of the myriad eyes that seem
To be litten for a moment with a wild Italian gleam
As *A che la morte* parodies the world's eternal theme
And pulses with the sunset glow?

There's a thief, perhaps, that listens with a face of frozen stone
In the City as the sun sinks low;
There's a portly man of business with a balance of his own,
There's a clerk and there's a butcher of a soft reposeful tone,
And they're all of them returning to the heavens they have known:
They are crammed and jammed in busses and—they're each of them alone
In the land where the dead dreams go.

There's a labourer that listens to the voices of the dead
In the City as the sun sinks low;
And his hand begins to tremble and his face is rather red
As he sees a loafer watching him and —there he turns his head
And stares into the sunset where his April love is fled,
For he hears her softly singing and his lonely soul is led
Through the land where the dead dreams go . . .

There's a barrel-organ carolling cross a golden street
In the City as the sun sinks low;
Though the music's only Verdi there's a world to make it sweet
Just as yonder yellow sunset where the earth and heaven meet
Mellows all the sooty City! Hark, a hundred thousand feet
Are marching on to glory through the poppies and the wheat
In the land where the dead dreams go.

So it's Jeremiah, Jeremiah,
What have you to say
When you meet the garland girls
Tripping on their way?
All around my gala hat
I wear a wreath of roses

(A long and lonely year it is
I've waited for the May!)
If any one should ask you,
The reason why I wear it is—
My own love, my true love is
coming home today.

And it's buy a bunch of violets for the
lady
(*It's lilac-time in London; it's
lilac-time in London!*)
Buy a bunch of violets for the
lady;
While the sky burns blue above:

On the other side the street you'll
find it shady
(*It's lilac-time in London; it's
lilac-time in London!*)
But buy a bunch of violets for the
lady,
And tell her she's your own true
love.

There's a barrel-organ carolling across
a golden street
In the City as the sun sinks glitter-
ing and slow;
And the music's not immortal; but
the world has made it sweet
And enriched it with the harmonies
that make a song complete
In the deeper heavens of music
where the night and morning
meet,
As it dies into the sunset glow;
And it pulses through the pleasures of
the City and the pain
That surround the singing organ
like a large eternal light,
And they've given it a glory and a
part to play again
In the Symphony that rules the
day and night.

And there, as the music changes,
The song runs round again;
Once more it turns and ranges
Through all its joy and pain:
Dissects the common carnival
Of passions and regrets;
And the wheeling world remem-
bers all
The wheeling song forgets.

*Come down to Kew in lilac-time, in
lilac-time, in lilac-time;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time
(it isn't far from London!)
And you shall wander hand in hand
with Love in summer's wonder-
land,
Come down to Kew in lilac-time
(it isn't far from London!)*

A VAGABOND SONG

Bliss Carman

There is something in the autumn
that is native to my blood—
Touch of manner, hint of mood;
And my heart is like a rhyme,
With the yellow and the purple
and the crimson keeping time.

The scarlet of the maples can shake
me like a cry
Of bugles going by.
And my lonely spirit thrills
To see the frosty asters like a smoke
upon the hills.

There is something in October sets
the gypsy blood astir;
We must rise and follow her,
When from every hill of flame
She calls and calls each vagabond by
name.

THE MOUNTAINS ARE A LONELY FOLK

HAMLIN GARLAND

The mountains they are silent folk
They stand afar—alone,
And the clouds that kiss their brows at night
Hear neither sigh nor groan.
Each bears him in his ordered place
As soldiers do, and bold and high
They fold their forests round their feet
And bolster up the sky.

SEA-FEVER

JOHN MASEFIELD

I must down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face and a grey dawn breaking.

I must down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must down to the seas again to the vagrant gypsy life.
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

THE WANDERER

ZOË AKINS

The ships are lying in the bay,
The gulls are swinging round their spars;
My soul as eagerly as they
Desires the margin of the stars.

So much do I love wandering,
So much I love the sea and sky,
That it will be a piteous thing
In one small grave to lie.

SPANISH WATERS

JOHN MASEFIELD

Spanish waters, Spanish waters, you are ringing in my ears,
Like a slow sweet piece of music from the grey forgotten years;
Telling tales, and beating tunes, and bringing weary thoughts to me
Of the sandy beach at Muertos, where I would that I could be.

There's a surf breaks on Los Muertos, and it never stops to roar,
And it's there we came to anchor, and it's there we went ashore,
Where the blue lagoon is silent amid snags of rotting trees,
Dropping like the clothes of corpses cast up by the seas.

We anchored at Los Muertos when the dipping sun was red,
We left her half-a-mile to sea, to west of Nigger Head;
And before the mist was on the Cay, before the day was done,
We were all ashore on Muertos with the gold that we had won.

We bore it through the marshes in a
half-score battered chests,
Sinking, in the sucking quagmires, to
the sunburn on our breasts,
Heaving over tree-trunks, gasping,
damning at the flies and heat,
Longing for a long drink, out of silver,
in a ship's cool lazareet.

The moon came white and ghostly
as we laid the treasure down,
There was gear there'd make a beg-
garman as rich as Lima Town,
Copper charms and silver trinkets
from the chests of Spanish crews,
Gold doubloons and double moydores,
louis d'ors and portagues,

Clumsy yellow-metal earrings from
the Indians of Brazil,
Uncut emeralds out of Rio, bezoar
stones from Guayaquil;
Silver, in the crude and fashioned,
pots of old Arica bronze,
Jewels from the bones of Incas dese-
crated by the Dons.

We smoothed the place with mattocks,
and we took and blazed the tree,
Which marks yon where the gear is
hid that none will ever see,
And we laid aboard the ship again,
and south away we steers,
Through the loud surf of Los Muertos
which is beating in my ears.

I'm the last alive that knows it. All
the rest have gone their ways
Killed, or died, or come to anchor in
the old Mulatas Cays,
And I go singing, fiddling, old and
starved and in despair,
And I know where all that gold is hid,
if I were only there.

It's not the way to end it all. I'm
old, and nearly blind,
And an old man's past's a strange
thing, for it never leaves his mind.
And I see in dreams, awhiles, the
beach, the sun's disc dipping red,
And the tall ship, under topsails,
swaying in past Nigger Head.

I'd be glad to step ashore there. Glad
to take a pick and go
To the lone blazed coco-palm tree in
the place no others know,
And lift the gold and silver that has
mouldered there for years
By the loud surf of Los Muertos
which is beating in my ears.

SONG OF THE SOULS SET FREE

WALTER CONRAD ARENSBERG

Wrap the earth in cloudy weather
For a shroud.
We have slipped the earthly tether,
We're above the cloud.
Peep and draw the cloud together,
Peep upon the bowed.

What can they be bowing under,
Wild and wan?
Peep, and draw the cloud asunder,
Peep, and wave a dawn.
It will make them rise and wonder
Whether we are gone.

TERROR

RICHARD ALDINGTON

I

Those of the earth envy us,
Envy our beauty and frail strength;
Those of the wind and the moon
Envy our pain.

II

For as a doe that has never borne child
We were swift to fly from terror;
And as fragile edged steel
We turned, we pierced, we endured.

III

We have known terror:
The terror of the wind and silent shadows,
The terror of great heights,
The terror of the worm,
The terror of thunder and fire,
The terror of water and slime,
The terror of horror and fear,
The terror of desire and pain—
The terror of apathy.

IV

As a beast, as an arrow of pine,
Terror cleft us,
Tore us in envy away,
So that for month upon month
Pain wore us, hope left us, despair clutched us.
For they of the earth envied us,
Envied our beauty and strength.

V

Yet because, though we faltered and wept,
We held fast, clung close to our love,
Scorned hate even as they scorned us,
Some god has lightened our lives,
Given back the cool mouth of song
And the hands that blossom of fire,
Given, too, the mouth crushed like a flower
Which unpetals in marvellous ways,
The limbs that are hard and straight
With maidenly thews and blood,
Given these so that day is aflame
And night shot golden with shafts.

VI

We have suffered, we have bled,
And those of the wind and the moon,
Envy our pain, the pain of the terror,
The delight no terror could slay.

THE FEAR

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson

I do not fear to die
'Neath the open sky,
To meet death in the fight
Face to face, upright.

But when at last we creep
Into a hole to sleep,
I tremble, cold with dread,
Lest I wake up dead.

WHO WALKS WITH BEAUTY

David Morton

Who walks with Beauty has no need of fear;
The sun and moon and stars keep pace with him,
Invisible hands restore the ruined year,
And time, itself, grows beautifully dim.
One hill will keep the footprints of the moon,
That came and went a hushed and secret hour;
One star at dusk will yield the lasting boon:
Remembered Beauty's white, immortal flower.

Who takes of Beauty wine and daily bread,
Will know no lack when bitter years are lean;

The brimming cup is by, the feast is spread,—
The sun and moon and stars his eyes have seen,
Are for his hunger and the thirst he slakes:
The wine of Beauty and the bread he breaks.

THE COIN

SARA TEASDALE

Into my heart's treasury
I slipped a coin
That time cannot take
Nor a thief purloin,—
Oh better than the minting
Of a gold-crowned king
Is the safe-kept memory
Of a lovely thing.

DIOGENES

MAX EASTMAN

A hut, and a tree,
And a hill for me,
And a piece of a weedy meadow.
I'll ask no thing,
Of God or king,
But to clear away his shadow.

MENDING WALL

ROBERT FROST

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing:
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
Oh, just another kind of out-door game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:
There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder

If I could put a notion in his head:
"Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down." I could say "Elves" to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors."

EARLY MORNING AT BARGIS

Hermann Hagedorn

Clear air and grassy lea,
  Stream-song and cattle-bell—
Dear man, what fools are we
  In prison-walls to dwell!

To live our days apart
  From green things and wide skies,
And let the wistful heart
  Be cut and crushed with lies!

Bright peaks!—And suddenly
  Light floods the placid dell,
The grass-tops brush my knee:
A good crop it will be,
  So all is well!
O man, what fools are we
  In prison-walls to dwell!

TEARS

Lizette Woodworth Reese

When I consider Life and its few years—
A wisp of fog betwixt us and the sun;
A call to battle, and the battle done
Ere the last echo dies within our ears;
A rose choked in the grass; an hour of fears;
The gusts that past a darkening shore do beat;
The burst of music down an unlistening street,—
I wonder at the idleness of tears.
Ye old, old dead, and ye of yesternight,
Chieftains, and bards, and keepers of the sheep,
By every cup of sorrow that you had,
Loose me from tears, and make me see aright
How each hath back what once he stayed to weep:
Homer his sight, David his little lad!

AFTER GRIEVING

Aline Kilmer

When I was young I was so sad!
  I was so sad! I did not know
Why any living thing was glad
  When one must some day sorrow so.
    But now when grief has come to me
    My heart is like a bird set free.

I always knew that it would come;
I always felt it waiting there;
Its shadow kept my glad voice dumb
And crushed my gay soul with despair.
But now that I have lived with grief.
I feel an exquisite relief.

Athletes who know their proven strength,
Ships that have shamed the hurricane:
These are my brothers, and at length
I shall come back to joy again.
However hard my life may be
I know it shall not conquer me.

BEYOND THE STARS

Charles Hanson Towne

Three days I heard them grieve when I lay dead,
(It was so strange to me that they should weep!)
Tall candles burned about me in the dark,
And a great crucifix was on my breast,
And a great silence filled the lonesome room.

I heard one whisper, "Lo! the dawn is breaking,
And he has lost the wonder of the day."
Another came whom I had loved on earth,
And kissed my brow and brushed my dampened hair.
Softly she spoke: "Oh, that he should not see
The April that his spirit bathed in! Birds
Are singing in the orchard, and the grass
That soon will cover him is growing green.
The daisies whiten on the emerald hills,
And the immortal magic that he loved
Wakens again—and he has fallen asleep."
Another said: "Last night I saw the moon
Like a tremendous lantern shine in heaven,
And I could only think of him—and sob.
For I remembered evenings wonderful
When he was faint with Life's sad loveliness,
And watched the silver ribbons wandering far
Along the shore, and out upon the sea.
Oh, I remembered how he loved the world,
The sighing ocean and the flaming stars,
The everlasting glamour God has given—
His tapestries that wrap the earth's wide room.
I minded me of mornings filled with rain
When he would sit and listen to the sound
As if it were lost music from the spheres.
He loved the crocus and the hawthorn-hedge,

He loved the shining gold of buttercups,
And the low droning of the drowsy bees
That boomed across the meadows. He was glad
At dawn or sundown; glad when Autumn came
With her worn livery and scarlet crown,
And glad when Winter rocked the earth to rest.
Strange that he sleeps today when Life is young,
And the wild banners of the Spring are blowing
With green inscriptions of the old delight."

I heard them whisper in the quiet room.
I longed to open then my sealèd eyes,
And tell them of the glory that was mine.
There was no darkness where my spirit flew,
There was no night beyond the teeming world.
Their April was like winter where I roamed;
Their flowers were like stones where now I fared.
Earth's day! it was as if I had not known
What sunlight meant! . . . Yea, even as they grieved
For all that I had lost in their pale place,
I swung beyond the borders of the sky,
And floated through the clouds, myself the air,
Myself the ether, yet a matchless being
Whom God had snatched from penury and pain
To draw across the barricades of heaven.
I clomb beyond the sun, beyond the moon;
In flight on flight I touched the highest star;
I plunged to regions where the Spring is born,
Myself (I asked not how) the April wind,
Myself the elements that are of God.
Up flowery stairways of eternity
I whirled in wonder and untrammeled joy,
An atom, yet a portion of His dream—
His dream that knows no end. . . .
I was the rain,
I was the dawn, I was the purple east,
I was the moonlight on enchanted nights,
(Yet time was lost to me); I was a flower
For one to pluck who loved me; I was bliss,
And rapture, splendid moments of delight;
And I was prayer, and solitude, and hope;
And always, always, always I was love.
I tore asunder flimsy doors of time,
And through the windows of my soul's new sight
I saw beyond the ultimate bounds of space.
I was all things that I had loved on earth—
The very moonbeam in that quiet room,
The very sunlight one had dreamed I lost,

The soul of the returning April
grass,
The spirit of the evening and the
dawn,
The perfume in unnumbered haw-
thorn-blooms.
There was no shadow on my perfect
peace,
No knowledge that was hidden from
my heart.
I learned what music meant; I read
the years;
I found where rainbows hide, where
tears begin;
I trod the precincts of things yet
unborn.

Yea, while I found all wisdom (being
dead),
They grieved for me . . . I should
have grieved for them!

PANDORA'S SONG

William Vaughn Moody

Of wounds and sore defeat
I made my battle stay;
Wingèd sandals for my feet
I wove of my delay;
Of weariness and fear,
I made my shouting spear;
Of loss, and doubt, and dread,
And swift oncoming doom
I made a helmet for my head
And a floating plume.
From the shutting mist of death,
From the failure of the breath,
I made a battle-horn to blow
Across the vales of overthrow.
O hearken, love, the battle-horn!
The triumph clear, the silver scorn!
O hearken where the echoes bring,
Down the grey disastrous morn,
Laughter and rallying!

CALVARY

Edwin Arlington Robinson

Friendless and faint, with martyred
steps and slow,
Faint for the flesh, but for the spirit
free,
Stung by the mob that came to see the
show,
The Master toiled along to Calvary;
We gibed him, as he went, with
houndish glee,
Till his dimmed eyes for us did over-
flow;
We cursed his vengeless hands thrice
wretchedly,—
And this was nineteen hundred years
ago.

But after nineteen hundred years the
shame
Still clings, and we have not made
good the loss
That outraged faith has entered in
his name.
Ah, when shall come love's courage
to be strong!
Tell me, O Lord—tell me, O Lord,
how long
Are we to keep Christ writhing on the
cross!

WHAT TOMAS AN BUILE SAID IN A PUB

James Stephens

I saw God. Do you doubt it?
Do you dare to doubt it?
I saw the Almighty Man. His hand
Was resting on a mountain, and
He looked upon the World and all
about it:
I saw Him plainer than you see me now,
You mustn't doubt it.

He was not satisfied;
His look was all dissatisfied.
His beard swung on a wind far out of sight
Behind the world's curve, and there was light
Most fearful from His forehead, and He sighed,
"That star went always wrong, and from the start
I was dissatisfied."

He lifted up His hand—
I say He heaved a dreadful hand
Over the spinning Earth, then I said: "Stay—
You must not strike it, God; I'm in the way;
And I will never move from where I stand."
He said, "Dear child, I feared that you were dead,"
And stayed His hand.

GOD'S GIFT

ALFRED NOYES

There's but one gift that all our dead desire,
One gift that men can give and that's a dream,
Unless we, too, can burn with that same fire
Of sacrifice; die to the things that seem;

Die to the little hatreds; die to greed;
Die to the old ignoble selves we knew;
Die to the base contempts of sect and creed,
And rise again, like these, with souls as true.

Nay (since these died before their tasks were finished)
Attempt new heights, bring even their dreams to birth:—
Build us that better world, O, not diminished
By one true splendor that they planned on earth.

And that's not done by sword, or tongue, or pen.
There's but one way. God make us better men.

HANDFULS

CARL SANDBURG

Blossoms of babies
Blinking their stories
Come soft
On the dusk and the babble;
Little red gamblers,
Handfuls that slept in the dust.

Summers of rain,
Winters of drift,
Tell off the years;
And they go back
Who came soft—
Back to the sod,
To silence and dust;
Gray gamblers,
Handfuls again.

THE LOOM OF YEARS

ALFRED NOYES

In the light of the silent stars that shine on the struggling sea,
In the weary cry of the wind and the whisper of flower and tree,
Under the breath of laughter, deep in the tide of tears,
I hear the Loom of the Weaver that weaves the Web of Years.

Edwin Arlington Robinson

The leaves of the winter wither and
sink in the forest mould
To colour the flowers of April with
purple and white and gold:
Light and scent and music die and
are born again
In the heart of a grey-haired woman
who wakes in a world of pain.

The hound, the fawn and the hawk,
and the doves that croon and coo,
We are all one woof of the weaving
and the one warp threads us
through,
One flying cloud on the shuttle that
carries our hopes and fears
As it goes thro' the Loom of the
Weaver that weaves the Web of
Years.

The crosiers of the fern, and the
crown, the crown of the rose,
Pass with our hearts to the Silence
where the wings of music close,
Pass and pass to the Timeless that
never a moment mars,
Pass and pass to the Darkness that
made the sun and stars.

Has the soul gone into the Darkness?
Is the dust sealed from sight?
Ah, hush, for the woof of the ages
returns thro' the warp of the
night!
Never that shuttle loses one thread
of our hopes and fears,
As it comes thro' the Loom of the
Weaver that weaves the Web of
Years.

O, woven in one wide Loom thro'
the throbbing weft of the whole,
One in spirit and flesh, one in body
and soul,
The leaf on the winds of autumn, the
bird in its hour to die,
The heart in its muffled anguish, the
sea in its mournful cry.

One with the flower of a day, one with
the withered moon,
One with the granite mountains that
melt into the noon,
One with the dream that triumphs
beyond the light of the spheres,
We come from the Loom of the Weav-
er that weaves the Web of Years.

ESSAYS

THE CREATIVE PASSION

H. G. Wells

Do men and women generally want a better world than this?

Do they want a world free from war, general economic security, a higher level of general health, long life, freedom and hope for everyone, beauty as the common quality of their daily lives?

The conventional answer to that question, especially if you put it to a public meeting with the appropriate gestures, is "Of course they do."

But the true answer is, "Not much!"

They may do so when they read an inspiring book by the fireside or hear a rousing speech, but they do not do so all round the twenty-four hours, or, indeed, at any time when there is any possibility of helping to realise such generous desires. "They," I write, but I should write "we." For we all are much of the same quality; the tallest man in the world is not much more than twice the height of the shortest, and the crime for which the murderer dies is just the concrete realisation of the saint's flash of anger. We are all but very little above egotism; our passions are warm only when they are immediate. I do not believe there has ever been a man who has lived steadfastly, continuously, and completely in pursuit of great ends. We are all vain, amenable to flattery, stirred by physical impulses, by the competitive instinct and jealousy, by anger at opposition, liable to fatigue, irritation, and uncontrollable and sometimes quite unaccountable fluctuations of motive.

Simple people like to believe there are Great Men in the world who are altogether above this tangle of drive and impulse. But indeed there are no such divinities.

What do we all find in our hearts? An immense self-love, a tremendous concentration of our attention upon our personal drama, physical cravings bare and physical cravings disguised and sublimated, desire to possess, desire for securities, and such-like fear-begotten desires, a desire for praise and approval and an instinctive dread of the disapproval and hostility of our fellow-men, an aggressive pride and self-assertion so soon as fear is allayed. We find, too, imitative impulses, competitive impulses—jealousy. In most cases there is also an extension of our egotism to cover our offspring, our dear ones, our friends and near kin. It is an extension of our egotism rather than a suppression of it. Is not that the drive and quality of most of our living?

How much of that complex of motives can be used to bind men together into a civilised state? One can no doubt play upon their fears, represent the dangers of conquest and cruelty by hostile peoples so vividly as to make them fight and compel others to fight for them in great wars, rally them to the flag in a state of panic, fill them with that frantic distrust and hate of strangers which is the basis of vulgar "Patriotism." With a little coercion one may even get them to pay national taxes

under the influence of these same mass-fears. The human animal is a semi-social animal, and though you cannot stampede it, as the American bison used to be stampeded, to rush over cliffs in a heaped herd-suicide, or like the Russian lemming to swarm into the sea and be drowned; yet it can be got moving in masses for collective ends, either good ends or bad ends, in an only very slightly rational manner.

But though these human motives I have cited so far do serve to keep us human beings together in smaller and larger communities with a sort of mutual restraint and help and tolerance, they supply no real force for any progressive betterment of human relations, and still less do they supply any driving force to organise and maintain a higher order of civilisation throughout the world.

As soon as the mass urgency subsides we tend to relapse into our own little personal lives of eating, drinking, and "having a good time," of "getting on," of posing to ourselves and others, of thinking and talking ourselves into agreeable states of self-approval, of doing pleasantly spiteful things to people we dislike. And if there is nothing more in our human composition than these common impulses of the everyday life, this coarse stuff of our common humanity, then all our talk and writing about a world peace and a higher civilisation is just dream stuff and nonsense. If that is all we are then we have no more chance of escaping more wars, more famines and disorders, cruelties, and diseases than a trainload of hogs bound for Chicago has of escaping the stockyard. None of the hogs may like the journey to the stockyard, or their experiences when they get there; that does not help them in the slightest degree to escape their destiny.

But there is something more in humanity than this, and it is this something more that transfuses all our life, our politics, our business and social organisation, with the colour of romance and the quality of a great adventure. Let me take two common incidents to show the kind of "something more" that I mean—the something more in which all our hopes reside.

It is night on the embankment of a river that flows through a great city, and a commonplace youngster leans over the parapet watching and thinking. Great warehouses, tall buildings, a tower or so, three or four graceful bridges, one beyond the other, set with bright lights and bearing a luminous traffic, drop their images into the stream, and each light they bear makes a long, slightly wavering reflection upon the smooth black water. A little steam-launch, just blackness and a red head-lamp fusses by. As it passes it tears through these tranquil banks of lamp reflections, drags a trail of startled and trembling shreds of light behind it, flings them apart, elongates them, re-unites them, weaves them into a dancing pattern that changes every moment into a fresh intricacy. Splash, splash, splash, comes the impact of the little boat's wash against the embankment. The youngster, struck with a strange wonder of beauty, watches these changes, tries to follow them, tries to detect the law of their

Photograph by G. C. Beresford

H. G. Wells

dexterous, wonderful rearrangements. All the heat and egotism of his personal life are forgotten. He is lifted outside all our everyday scheme of motives. He is possessed by the desire to know and understand.

Every one of us has had such moments of pure mental desire. For most of us they pass; we are too busy and preoccupied. Some few of us they seize upon and make into those devotees of inquiry, men of science.

Now take my second instance, a row of yards behind a row of mean houses in the same great city. Scarcely one of these yards is neglected or purely utilitarian. In more than half of them are evidences of effort to make some sort of garden or arbour or such-like pleasant and orderly arrangement. You rarely see people playing in these yards or resting in them; they are overlooked by a railway and very noisy. But nevertheless there you have the plainest evidence of an impulse to order and make, the rudiment of the garden-making, house-building impulse. In most of these yards it has been an unprofitable, useless, and perhaps disappointing effort, but it has been at work there. In nearly every man and woman there is something of this same garden-making, arbour-building impulse. Here again is a second impersonal motive to which we can turn from the personal and jealous passions that commonly possess us. It is an ennobling motive; witness the face of a skilful painter or carpenter intent upon his work.

Now this desire for knowledge and the impulse to make are the really hopeful creative forces in human life. They are the something more and the something different, on which I base all my hopes. Submerged and undeveloped, overridden by competition, fear, jealousy, vanity, they are yet to be found in nearly all of us. The aim of true education is to release them, nourish them, give them power and the possibility of co-operation. In this possibility lies our sole hope that the ultimate fate of mankind, now packed in its nationalist trucks upon the railroad of nationalism, warfare, and economic selfishness, will not be the same as that of those hogs upon their way to Chicago.

ON BEING WHERE YOU BELONG

David Grayson

Sunday Morning, May 20th.

On Friday I began planting my corn. For many days previously I went out every morning at sun-up, in the clear, sharp air, and thrust my hand deep down in the soil of the field. I do not know that I followed any learned agricultural rule, but somehow I liked to do it. It has seemed reasonable to me, instead of watching for a phase of the moon (for I do not cultivate the moon), to inquire of the earth itself. For many days I had no response; the soil was of an icy, moist coldness, as of death. "I am not ready yet," it said; "I have not rested my time."

Early in the week we had a day or two of soft sunshine, of fecund

warmth, to which the earth lay open, willing, passive. On Thursday morning, though a white frost silvered the harrow ridges, when I thrust my hand into the soil I felt, or seemed to feel, a curious response: a strange answering of life to life. The stone had been rolled from the sepulchre!

And I knew then that the destined time had arrived for my planting. That afternoon I marked out my corn-field, driving the mare to my home-made wooden marker, carefully observant of the straightness of the rows; for a crooked corn-row is a sort of immorality. I brought down my seed corn from the attic, where it had hung waiting all winter, each ear suspended separately by the white, up-turned husks. They were the selected ears of last year's crop, even of size throughout, smooth of kernel, with tips well-covered—the perfect ones chosen among many to perpetuate the highest excellencies of the crop. I carried them to the shed next my barn, and shelled them out in my hand machine: as fine a basket of yellow dent seed as a man ever saw. I have listened to endless discussions as to the relative merits of flint and dent corn. I here cast my vote emphatically for yellow dent: it is the best Nature can do!

I found my seed-bag hanging, dusty, over a rafter in the shed, and Harriet sewed a buckle on the strip that goes around the waist. I cleaned and sharpened my hoe.

"Now," I said to myself, "give me a good day and I am ready to plant."

The sun was just coming up on Friday, looking over the trees into a world of misty and odorous freshness. When I climbed the fence I dropped down in the grass at the far corner of the field. I had looked forward this year with pleasure to the planting of a small field by hand—the adventure of it—after a number of years of horse planting (with Horace's machine) of far larger fields. There is an indescribable satisfaction in answering, "Present!" to the roll-call of Nature: to plant when the earth is ready, to cultivate when the soil begins to bake and harden, to harvest when the grain is fully ripe. It is the chief joy of him who lives close to the soil that he comes, in time, to beat in consonance with the pulse of the earth; its seasons become his seasons; its life his life.

Behold me, then, with a full seed-bag suspended before me, buckled both over the shoulders and around the waist, a shiny hoe in my hand (the scepter of my dominion), a comfortable, rested feeling in every muscle of my body, standing at the end of the first long furrow there in my field on Friday morning—a whole spring day open before me! At that moment I would not have changed my place for the place of any king, prince, or president.

At first I was awkward enough, for it has been a long time since I have done much hand planting; but I soon fell into the rhythmic swing of the sower, the sure, even, accurate step; the turn of the body and the flexing of the wrists as the hoe strikes downward; the deftly hollowed hole; the swing of the hand to the seed-bag; the sure fall of the kernels; the return of the hoe; the final determining pressure of the soil upon the seed.

One falls into it and follows it as he would follow the rhythm of a march.

Even the choice of seed becomes automatic, instinctive. At first there is a conscious counting by the fingers —five seeds:

> One for the blackbird,
> One for the crow,
> One for the cutworm,
> Two to grow.

But after a time one ceases to count five, and *feels* five, instinctively rejecting a monstrous six, or returning to complete an inferior four.

I wonder if you know the feel of the fresh, soft soil, as it answers to your steps, giving a little, responding a little (as life always does)—and is there not something endlessly good and pleasant about it? And the movement of the arms and shoulders, falling easily into that action and reaction which yields the most service to the least energy! Scientists tell us that the awkward young eagle has a wider wing-stretch than the old, skilled eagle. So the corn planter, at noon, will do his work with half the expended energy of the early morning: he attains the artistry of motion. And quite beyond and above this physical accomplishment is the ever-present, scarcely conscious sense of reward, repayment, which one experiences as he covers each planting of seeds.

As the sun rose higher the mists stole secretly away, first toward the lower brook-hollows, finally disappearing entirely; the morning coolness passed, the tops of the furrows dried out to a lighter brown, and still I followed the long planting. At each return I refilled my seed-bag, and sometimes I drank from the jug of water which I had hidden in the grass. Often I stood a moment by the fence to look up and around me. Through the clear morning air I could hear the roosters crowing vaingloriously from the barnyard, and the robins were singing, and occasionally from the distant road I heard the rumble of a wagon. I noted the slow kitchen smoke from Horace's chimney, the tip of which I could just see over the hill from the margin of my field—and my own pleasant home among its trees—and my barn—all most satisfying to look upon. Then I returned to the sweat and heat of the open field, and to the steady swing of the sowing.

Joy of life seems to me to arise from a sense of being where one belongs, as I feel right here; of being foursquare with the life we have chosen. All the discontented people I know are trying sedulously to be something they are not, to do something they cannot do. In the advertisements of the county paper I find men angling for money by promising to make women beautiful and men learned or rich—overnight —by inspiring good farmers and carpenters to be poor doctors and lawyers. It is curious, is it not, with what skill we will adapt our sandy land to potatoes and grow our beans in clay, and with how little wisdom we farm the soils of our own natures. We try to grow poetry where plumbing would thrive grandly!—not knowing that plumbing is as important and honourable and necessary to this earth as poetry.

I understand it perfectly; I too, followed long after false gods. I thought I must rush forth to see the world, I must forthwith become great, rich, famous; and I hurried hither and thither, seeking I knew not what. Consuming my days with the infinite distractions of travel, I missed, as one who attempts two occupations at once, the sure satisfaction of either. Beholding the exteriors of cities and of men, I was deceived with shadows; my life took no hold upon that which is deep and true. Colour I got, and form, and a superficial aptitude in judging by symbols. It was like the study of a science: a hasty review gives one the general rules, but it requires a far profounder insight to know the fertile exceptions.

But as I grow older I remain here on my farm, and wait quietly for the world to pass this way. My oak and I, we wait, and we are satisfied. Here we stand among our clods; our feet are rooted deep within the soil. The wind blows upon us and delights us, the rain falls and refreshes us, the sun dries and sweetens us. We are become calm, slow, strong; so we measure rectitudes and regard essentials, my oak and I.

I would be a hard person to dislodge or uproot from this spot of earth. I belong here; I grow here. I like to think of the old fable of the wrestler of Irassa. For I am veritably that Anteus who was the wrestler of Irassa and drew his strength from the ground. So long as I tread the long furrows of my planting, with my feet upon the earth, I am invincible and unconquerable. Hercules himself, though he comes upon me in the guise of Riches, or Fame, or Power, cannot overthrow me—save as he takes me away from this soil. For at each step my strength is renewed. I forget weariness, old age has no dread for me.

Some there may be who think I talk dreams; they do not know reality. My friend, did it ever occur to you that you are unhappy because you have lost connection with life? Because your feet are not somewhere firmly planted upon the soil of reality? Contentment, and indeed usefulness, comes as the infallible result of great acceptances, great humilities—of not trying to make ourselves this or that (to conform to some dramatized version of ourselves), but of surrendering ourselves to the fullness of life—of letting life flow through us. To be used!—that is the sublimest thing we know.

It is a distinguishing mark of greatness that it has a tremendous hold upon real things. I have seen men who seemed to have behind them, or rather within them, whole societies, states, institutions: how they come at us, like Atlas bearing the world! For they act not with their own feebleness, but with a strength as of the Whole of Life. They speak, and the words are theirs, but the voice is the Voice of Mankind.

I don't know what to call it: being right with God or right with life. It is strangely the same thing; and God is not particular as to the name we know him by, so long as we know Him. Musing upon these secret things, I seem to understand what the theologians in their darkness have

made so obscure. Is it not just this at-one-ment with life which sweetens and saves us all?

In all these writings I have glorified the life of the soil until I am ashamed. I have loved it because it saved me. The farm for me, I decided long ago, is the only place where I can flow strongly and surely. But to you, my friend, life may present a wholly different aspect, variant necessities. Knowing what I have experienced in the city, I have sometimes wondered at the happy (even serene) faces I have seen in crowded streets. There must be, I admit, those who can flow and be at one with that life, too. And let them handle their money, and make shoes, and sew garments, and write in ledgers—if that completes and contents them. I have no quarrel with any one of them. It is, after all, a big and various world, where men can be happy in many ways.

For every man is a magnet, highly and singularly sensitized. Some draw to them fields and woods and hills, and are drawn in return; and some draw swift streets and the riches which are known to cities. It is not of importance what we draw, but that we really draw. And the greatest tragedy in life, as I see it, is that thousands of men and women never have the opportunity to draw with freedom; but they exist in weariness and labour, and are drawn upon like inanimate objects by those who live in unhappy idleness. They do not farm; they are farmed. But that is a question foreign to present considerations. We may be assured, if we draw freely, like the magnet of steel which gathers its iron filings about it in beautiful and symmetrical forms, that the things which we attract will also become symmetrical and harmonious with our lives.

Thus flowing with life, self-surrendering to life, a man becomes indispensable to life, he is absolutely necessary to the conduct of this universe. And it is the feeling of being necessary, of being desired, flowing into a man that produces the satisfaction of contentment. Often and often I think to myself:

These fields have need of me; my horse whinnies when he hears my step; my dog barks a welcome. These, my neighbours, are glad of me. The corn comes up fresh and green to my planting; my buckwheat bears richly. I am indispensable in this place. What is more satisfactory to the human heart than to be needed and to know we are needed? One line in the Book of Chronicles, when I read it, flies up at me out of the printed page as though it were alive, conveying newly the age-old agony of a misplaced man. After relating the short and evil history of Jehoram, King of Judah, the account ends—with the appalling terseness which often crowns the dramatic climaxes of that matchless writing:

"And (he) departed without being desired."

Without being desired! I have wondered if any man was ever cursed with a more terrible epitaph!

And so I planted my corn; and in the evening I felt the dumb weariness of physical toil. Many times in older days I have known the wakeful nerve-weariness of cities. This was

not it. It was the weariness which, after supper, seizes upon one's limbs with half-aching numbness. I sat down on my porch with a nameless content. I looked off across the countryside. I saw the evening shadows fall, and the moon come up. And I wanted nothing I had not. And finally sleep swept in resistless waves upon me and I stumbled up to bed—and sank into dreamless slumber.

NURMI BREAKS A RECORD

ROBERT LITTELL

Where once sat twenty-four votes for Oscar W. Underwood an equal number of Western Union Messenger boys are tearing around a wooden track. The boards pound under rangy young legs, and numbers flapping loose from eager backs tell us which of them is Pressman, Hellas, Butz or Sheehy. Through a light haze loom American flags, and black-hatted figures are tiered all the way to the Garden's roof. The crowd has come to see the big fellows run, but is not too impatient to kid the messengers as they rush by. "Go it, big boy! . . . That's form all right . . . I'm betting on 288." As the messengers finish, slow down, walk off patting the winner on the back, sweatered figures emerge in the interval before the next race to trot or spring independently around, exhibiting every known variety of leg action, every possible leanness or stumpiness of limb, every conceivable angle of nose cleaving the air.

Thirty-three events are to be run off tonight. Paavo Nurmi is the thirty-first. Before we get to him we must watch a medley of sprints, middle-distances, long-distances, walks, relay-races, by girls, messengers, experts, world's record holders. Rather a long curtain-raiser for the great Finn. Yet all these contests between the weary and the not quite so weary, this multitude of legs straining, or flagging stubbornly, in good form and bad, will give us something whereby to judge perfection when it comes. It does not seem possible that there are so many kinds of legs, nor so many different ways to run. The winners are usually the simplest in form, leaving behind them thrashing arms, uptilted heads, rolling bodies, all those whose motions go off into other gestures than that of running fast.

Little girls rush furiously for half a lap, bent low like bicycle riders, their bright jerseys flashing in a crazy quilt of speed. Over in the centre of the arena a winner is being presented with a huge silver trophy. Under our noses a long race is ending, and the victor crosses the finish line just behind a poor wretch who has still the whole track to cover if he would finish too. And in the eyes of an inattentive crowd probably the last shall be first. In the mass the runners look alike, and one's desire to distinguish between Sheppard, Btesch, Liljiberg, E. Egg and Ernest Opacity goes unrewarded. Now in

the slack time between events trot miscellaneous figures, warming up. Among them a smallish figure in grey sweater and long grey trousers, rather slow, rather precise, rather erect, jogs up and down, careless of all the others. A murmur in the crowd. "That's Nurmi!"

But his time is not yet. There are still several races, among them a long walk for which the previous record is some twenty-two minutes. Can such an interminable spectacle possibly be interesting? Yet it turns out to be fascinating, because so very different from any walking you or I have ever done. The heels must touch the ground first, and the knees must not bend, so in the effort to obey these rules and reach the height of speed the half-dozen bodies sidle swiftly in an alert upward-jerking step. A motion that seems ungainly, unnatural until one is a little used to it, and the monotony of an apparent effort not to run is transformed into the gruelling necessity of walking faster than seems humanly possible.

As the races become more important, the crowd of judges in derby hats and dinner coats seems to increase. Their function is to hold invisible stop-watches in the palm of the right hand, and consult them with a sideways glance. One of them, portly with the unathletic roundness that only judges of athletic events seem to have, wears a silk hat. Surely his stop-watch is made of gold. Now comes the heart-breaking mile, and soon after it Willie Ritola, a lesser Finn, in the 5000 metre run. Nurmi is not competing, but for once we have something worth comparing him with. Ritola starts off at a wide-stepping space which surely he cannot maintain thirty-four times around the track, but he does, running apparently more against his own sense of time than against opponents.

Now at last comes the final interval. Nurmi is to run two and a quarter miles. There he stands, a tiny figure way down at the other end of the arena, taking off his grey sweater. The band starts playing something solemn, slow, undistinguished. The crowd, scenting a national anthem, rise as one man, with their hats off. They are right; the national anthem of Finland. Far down at the other end, stands Nurmi at rigid attention, his long trousers half-unbuttoned. When the anthem stops he finishes unbuttoning them and peels them off. A slow, ceremonious getting into position. The pistol. In a few seconds flashes by not a small grey figure at a jog trot, but a beautiful slim blond apparition in white shorts and blue jersey. The length of the stride and the energy put into it seem terrific for so small a figure. Very soon he is in the lead. Each time he comes around he seems just the same, and almost puts his foot down on the same place. He knows exactly what he is doing. He is not racing against the other men, but against time, with accurate knowledge to the second of how fast he must go if he is to break the record. At the third lap he goes around in twenty-five seconds, half way through the time is the same; two laps from the end it is still precisely twenty-five seconds. And the motions made for each stride seem

identical to the motions of the stride before, and from start to finish it is the same stride. The monotony of such regularity might pall, but after a few laps one becomes fascinated with a spectacle which might be part of eternity. He might always have been running, a year from now he may be running still, in the same place, at the same speed, with his arms forever economically reaching ahead, running a little too, his small neat head straight in the air, his body beautifully perpendicular. As if following some tremendous pull ahead of him he seems to be running a little downhill, easily, without effort, in contrast to lesser runners, for whom the hill is always up. Not a sound, scarcely a parting of the lips, not a falter or unnecessary motion, not a single visible increase or slackening of pace. The others fall way behind; he passes, he laps them all, lightly, inexorably moving on and on.

A bell. The last lap. The crowds roar. A blue jersey flashes by the finish line, and this incomparably wound-up mechanism slows down, turns, stops.

And fifteen seconds have been shaved off another world's record.

FEAR

Frank Jewett Mather, Jr.

Once I saw thirty young men face for several hours the prospect of death at sea. With one exception they gave no sign of fear. Nothing but a shade more smiling and exchange of jokes than was natural in a chill blast and an angry sea would have told the fact that the disabled scout-patrol boat would probably never reach port. One Naval Reservist, however, feared most pitiably. His eyes stared restlessly out of a yellow, twitching face; his pale lips moved mechanically in idle questions and still more futile suggestions. More gently bred than most of his mates, he was also morally the superior of most of them. This they knew; they looked at his distress without scorn and with an entirely friendly pity. I suppose they dimly perceived that it was a doom for which he was in no way responsible, and felt the irony of a patriotism that had cast him into a service in which ordinary courage was simply in the day's work. Simple men—as I was constantly to learn in the Navy—often have the most extraordinarily delicate and just intuitions of personal crises. What they sorrowed for in a loyal mate who was born to fear they would have mocked at in a calm-sea braggart.

Since M——happened to be the only physical coward I had ever studied in danger, and since I knew that he had in full measure all the finer moral qualities that are supposed to make for courage, I naturally pondered his case. The trouble I can only surmise. Water of any sort spoke peril to him. He feared as much in a benign day of drifting under blue skies as he did in those rare moments when the safety of the scout

patrol hung by the hair of a spark plug or a steering pinion. His life on a patrol, which for most of us was ordinarily a recreation, must have been a hell, and no man less deserved it. I could only suppose that we had to do with some profound lesion in childhood, some fright at the seaside or even in the baby's bath, that had scarred and warped his consciousness for life. Perhaps a psychoanalyst could have located the fount of his fear, but the war was too short for such studies and cures. We could only hope that the capricious special providence which sat up aloft at Newport would put our friend ashore. I suppose he was a classical instance of what we loosely call the physical coward: that his malady was akin to that unreasoning dread of pointed things, of enclosed spaces, of certain animals, even of certain odors, which has afflicted many an equally gifted person.

II

That kind of fear is not my subject. I am thinking rather of that rare fear which falls on an ordinarily brave person; and I am considering no ordinary or passing qualm, but that terror which clutches the throat and loosens the knees, exudes in cold sweat, and, while it lasts, disables abjectly the physical and moral man. I have felt it a few times, as I suppose everyone has felt it. The occasion was generally the slightest. I have feared most horribly when I was really in no danger. In every case it was panic before the unknown, generally before an unknown which thrust itself upon me before mental preparation could be made and the unknownness thus diminished. Perhaps this is the fear of the normal man and, if so, animals and savages must suffer terribly from it, for the unknown bulks large in their lives, and their memories are short. Probably the demon-worship so common among savages arises from the need of exteriorizing their fears. Your demon, however appalling, is at least a fixed and calculable thing. Even to an orthodox soul, Satan moving up and down the earth and seeking what he may devour is more endurable than is the unexpected touching of a big cool fungus in a forest stroll after nightfall.

In any case, my own abject fears have always been occasioned by the unknown, and generally by an unknown that proclaimed itself with instantaneous suddenness. My boyhood fears grew out of my reading. Being a good reader of the 'Frank' books,—I wonder if that exemplary boy-hero still delights boyhood,—whenever I passed dark doorways on my way to bed I imagined the Indians would leap out at me, and there was a distinct prickling sensation under my tow-colored scalp-lock. But this was rather a flirtation with the idea of fear than fear itself, for I only half believed that the Indians had really crept up from peaceful South Street to our third story.

But it was real fear when I visited my grandparents in the Connecticut Valley, and the lightning cracked about the house and the thunder growled and boomed endlessly between the hills. I shut it out by cowering under the bedclothes, and trembled long after it had passed. It

was not the quite common nervous fear of electrical storms,—for I have since headed my tiny yawl into thunder squalls without fear,—but the fear of an angry God and an imminent Day of Judgment. I can hardly recall a time when I had not read the Book of the Revelation, the gorgeous imagery of which has always captured my imagination; and our pastor had incessantly preached that the day of wrath was at hand. So when the lightning was let loose there came vivid if confused images of sinister horsemen in the sky, and the unstopping of awful vials, and the bass prelude of the thunder, hushed only to bring expectancy of the trumpet blast, and my small and unworthy self standing among the newly risen and uncanny dead, to answer for my sins before an all-knowing and inexorable God.

I had deeply sinned, notably against the Commandments concerning honoring parents, false witness, and stealing. I had chewed forbidden green apples, carefully ejecting the pomace in order that I might say I had not eaten them. I had stolen from the pantry incalculable quantities of brown sugar—now, I fear, an unknown dainty to childhood—and raisins. Once, in the cellar of a building under construction, I had stripped myself and wallowed deliciously in the clean sand-pile. Although this was not a specifically forbidden indulgence, for even parents cannot foresee every working of original sin in a child, this indecent episode actually troubled me most. It seemed a hard thing to avow before the last tribunal, and calculated to add to the weight of guilt the almost worse sting of ridicule.

I suppose I suffered more from fear in those otherwise happy summers in Connecticut than many people do in a lifetime. The panic gradually abated as I saw that after many thunderstorms the last trump had never blown, while, as I began to guess that our pastor's confidence that the Last Day was imminent would not be borne out by events, his other preaching encouraged me to hope that although God had been notoriously difficult in the matter of apples He might be indulgent as to brown sugar, raisins, and sand-piles. So the old fear wore off and, perhaps because there had been so much of it, I have no sure recollection of being deeply affrighted again until I was in the thirties. Meanwhile I had traveled fearlessly through a cholera epidemic, the risk, such as it was, being entirely calculable.

III

Next, fear came to me in the most ridiculous and preposterous of guises —panic fear over nothing. All day long I had been whipping the oceanic eddies below the Grande Décharge for ouananiche. Evening fell, and my two Indian guides, knowing the difficulty of taking the canoe up the portage in the dusk, had gone ahead, cautioning me not to lose the trail. It was a question of half a mile uphill by a well-beaten path, and I trod it without thought, only to find myself suddenly on a broad logging-road which I had never seen before. A moment's reflection would have told me that the road must lead away

from the landing-place; that my guides must be within earshot and would answer a call. At worst I had merely the prospect of a bivouac on the island; many a time I had camped under worse conditions—nothing to fear but blackflies; matches to fight them and to cook the ouananiche in my creel. As getting lost in the woods goes, I was in the most auspicious case possible, even if my guides should not find me till morning.

None of these perfectly obvious reflections were actually made, though I had made them profitably in many a similar emergency. A sense of being hopelessly lost and a mad desire for escape overcame me. I began to sprint along the logging-road as I was headed until sheer breathlessness and the great gray stretch of Lake St. John, quiet in the twilight, checked my foolish flight. Then I sat down, thought out what had happened, and retraced with care the steps I had taken in panic haste. In a few minutes the halloos of the guides answered my own.

This kind of fear is common enough, and it has driven to unnecessary death many a novice in forest and mountain. It was only odd that it befell one with a woodsman's experience. It was the suddenness with which the sense of being lost confronted me that was my moral undoing. My frightened muscles worked before my mind could grasp a very simple situation.

Next comes to mind a relief ship off Messina in earthquake time, and a sullen rainy evening. For two days we had lived in increasing filth and disorder, so that the devastation of the ruins and the spectacle of the maimed and the dead being impartially extracted from the rubbish heap that Messina was become had been almost a relief. Having amazing news and being unable to get away, we newspaper men were chafing until we hated each other and, I fear, even the wounded, who both littered up our ship and delayed its sailing. Every day there had been little shocks and crashing-down of crevised walls that still stood. Suddenly there was a great explosion, far heavier and more palpable than the minor shakings and mutterings to which our ears and nerves were accustomed. Dead silence on the erstwhile clamorous deck of the crowded ship; wailing from the refugees, camped on the shattered quay. I trembled as I waited for the tidal wave to break the ship on the stone quay, and when the wave delayed I rushed to my stateroom and turned my chattering teeth to the wall.

Nothing had happened but the bursting of the boiler in the ship alongside. It was too sudden to be borne. Probably if a meteorologist had told me that another earthquake would destroy us all within a minute I should have met the event like a brave man. At least I hope so.

IV

Evidently mental preparation is of the essence of all courage. We do what we have willed to do in advance, and the more vividly we have anticipated peril in imagination the more manfully shall we face it when it comes. The Navy, a service where minor peril is in the day's work, does well to prepare

its men; it beats into every beginner the duty of keeping still in danger and waiting for orders, and that of keeping quiet and not moving about even if no orders come. It is the first move that counts for panic. A man who stands firmly on both feet in time of danger, and keeps his mouth shut, will always be sufficiently brave. Such is the faith of the Navy, and it works in practice —witness the drill of the sinking Camperdown and many a less spectacular instance.

I saw how this worked when the fire ran over the oily water where twenty patrol boats were at dock. It caught on the painted sides of two submarine-chasers, roared up the gulf between them, crackled up the canvased sides of their deck-houses, and licked twenty feet in the air on their flagpoles and radio-stretchers. But all this was merely spectacular; what really counted was that it also gnawed at the thin wooden boxes containing the fourteen-pound shells. The molasses-like trickle of melting trinitrotoluol from the heated depth-bombs was unpleasing to the eye, but otherwise negligible. What really counted was the first fourteen-pounder shell. If it detonated, so would all the depth-bombs, and our little fleet would be blown to an ooze indistinguishable from the habitual slime of our basin. This we all knew—some five hundred half-trained men on twenty little scout-patrol boats. The situation was entirely calculable and well understood. Three quarters of an inch of canvased pine—three or four minutes—a certain number of gallons of water—stood between us and the most complete annihilation conceivable.

A dash for the land would have given an off chance of survival. Nobody thought of it, or if he did he promptly repressed the thought. All simply waited in stillness and reckoned the event. For a few seconds my muscles carried me behind the triced-up grating of the gangway. My muscles mistook it for a protection. My mind smiled at the folly and took me to the after six-pounder, to be blown up where I belonged, at my station. That was everybody's thought. Meanwhile I had none of the proper feelings, didn't recall my loved ones, nor yet did my life unroll itself before me like a scroll. I merely kept my eye on the fire, as it throve on the ammunition boxes thirty feet across the pier. Would the first shell start? Just a dull curiosity, as if the event, while of general interest, hardly concerned myself. As I looked up and down the fleet, the picture was everywhere the same: quiet men, standing still and wondering. The *Bluejacket's Manual* plainly had wrought its perfect work in us all, and though our taking off would have lacked the superb "swank" of the Camperdown it would have been entirely "seagoing," and that is all that can be expected of landsmen in little patrol-boats.

Naturally I took a proper pride in a steadiness which had been tried by fire; but I was soon to learn that there was no precaution that really worked with the old enemy Surprise, if he could catch you without time to think.

V

This essay ends, as it began, on a scout-patrol boat, but differently, for it concerns a fear where no danger was

involved—merely the worst fear, that of the too-sudden unknown. S. P. 227 had just come in from four days of convoy escort and patrol, when orders came to meet a British ship with a precious cargo off Barnegat, at seven next morning, and escort her to New York. We were caught with empty bunkers and half a crew. I put in the coal when I had expected to make up lost sleep, and at one o'clock I had my stern toward Ambrose Lightship and was pointing southward against the new and ugly short chop of a southerly half-gale. Suddenly our call letter flashed urgently, north of the lightship. I ignored it, for the time was short to our morning rendezvous off Barnegat whistling buoy. But the signal flashed so incessantly that I woke the captain, who with an oath of disgust ordered me to turn back. At the place whence the signal had come there was nothing—just blackness, confusion of waters, and uncomfortable proximity of lightless monsters stealing into the harbor. The mystery—a simple one, merely a fellow S. P. tired of waiting—was disquieting at the moment, and I turned the ship toward Barnegat in a restless and querying mood.

At that moment of uncertainty there rose far up the bay, directly over New York, an incredible column of rosy light. It climbed swiftly and intact thousands of feet into the air and spread into an incandescent rose. Followed, before the mind grasped the spectacle, a concussion which shook me to the marrow.

I had felt the like from Capri when Vesuvius was in full eruption. But this was unexplained and inexplicable. The imagination made wild work of it: an infernal plot! New York destroyed! My knees knocked together. I tottered on the dancing-bridge and clutched the rail for support, while I trembled and the chill crept through my greatcoat and oilskins. Perhaps it was not long, but it seemed long to the moment when I pulled myself together, recalled that, whatever had happened to New York, I had a course to steer and a ship to meet. When the coppery face of the bo's'n appeared over the rail and told me the hold was dry, that was reassuring. I became once more an officer, and for the rest of a wild night the wonders in sight and sound of the exploding powder-works at Perth Amboy, while still unexplained, became no longer terrifying, but merely an unexpectedly romantic decoration for an uncommonly arduous bit of routine duty.

I am no psychologist, and have no mind to analyze these personal experiences of fear. Sufficient if I have suggested that the worst fears are those of imagination, and that we suffer most when there is nothing to fear at all. Possibly one might conclude that a well-trained person would never suffer disabling fear if he fully understood whatever emergency might arise, or if he had time to adjust himself to it even without understanding it. But the usually patient vassals of the rational self have their sway in certain shocks. Their animal quickness outruns the surer mental processes of their master, and from time to time they assert transiently their primal rule.

Perfect love is said to put away fear, and, theoretically, perfect knowledge

ought to do so. Practically, the more we know, whether through experience or imagination, the less we shall fear. And the hope of the race seems to lie in such an increase in knowledge as will check and shorten those panics in which a man or a mob may either tremble impotently or turn and rend others as fear turns to fury. But since our knowledge is never complete, and the silent vassals never sleep, there will probably be no time when a man can be quite sure of standing or dying, a gentleman, unafraid.

WITH THE PHOTOGRAPHER

STEPHEN LEACOCK

"I want my photograph taken," I said. The photographer looked at me without enthusiasm. He was a drooping man in a gray suit, with the dim eye of a natural scientist. But there is no need to describe him. Everybody knows what a photographer is like.

"Sit there," he said, "and wait."

I waited an hour. I read the *Ladies Companion* for 1912, the *Girls Magazine* for 1902 and the *Infants Journal* for 1888. I began to see that I had done an unwarrantable thing in breaking in on the privacy of this man's scientific pursuits with a face like mine.

After an hour the photographer opened the inner door.

"Come in," he said severely.

I went into the studio.

"Sit down," said the photographer.

I sat down in a beam of sunlight filtered through a sheet of factory cotton hung against a frosted skylight.

The photographer rolled a machine into the middle of the room and crawled into it from behind.

He was only in it a second,—just time enough for one look at me,—and then he was out again, tearing at the cotton sheet and the window panes with a hooked stick, apparently frantic for light and air.

Then he crawled back into the machine again and drew a little black cloth over himself. This time he was very quiet in there. I knew that he was praying and I kept still.

When the photographer came out at last, he looked very grave and shook his head.

"The face is quite wrong," he said.

"I know," I answered quietly; "I have always known it."

He sighed.

"I think," he said, "the face would be better three-quarters full."

"I'm sure it would," I said enthusiastically, for I was glad to find that the man had such a human side to him. "So would yours. In fact," I continued, "how many faces one sees that are apparently hard, narrow, limited, but the minute you get them three-quarters full they get wide, large, almost boundless in——"

But the photographer had ceased to listen. He came over and took my head in his hands and twisted it sideways. I thought he meant to kiss me, and I closed my eyes.

But I was wrong.

He twisted my face as far as it would go and then stood looking at it.

He sighed again.

"I don't like the head," he said.

Then he went back to the machine and took another look.

"Open the mouth a little," he said.

I started to do so.

"Close it," he added quickly.

Then he looked again.

"The ears are *bad*," he said; "droop them a little more. Thank you. Now the eyes. Roll them in under the lids. Put the hands on the knees, please, and turn the face just a little upward. Yes, that's better. Now just expand the lungs! So! And hump the neck—that's it—and just contract the waist—ha!—and twist the hip up toward the elbow—now! I still don't quite like the face, it's just a trifle *too* full, but——"

I swung myself round on the stool.

"Stop," I said with emotion but, I think, with dignity. "This face is *my* face. It is not yours, it is mine. I've lived with it for forty years and I know its faults. I know it's out of drawing. I know it wasn't made for me, but it's *my* face, the only one I have—" I was conscious of a break in my voice but I went on—"such as it is, I've learned to love it. And this is my mouth, not yours. These ears are *mine*, and if your machine is too narrow—" Here I started to rise from the seat.

Snick!

The photographer had pulled a string. The photograph taken. I could see the machine still staggering from the shock.

"I think," said the photographer, pursing his lips in a pleased smile, "that I caught the features just in a moment of animation."

"So!" I said bitingly,—"features, eh? You didn't think I could animate them, I suppose? But let me see the picture."

"Oh, there's nothing to see yet," he said, "I have to develop the negative first. Come back on Saturday and I'll let you see a proof of it."

On Saturday I went back.

The photographer beckoned me in. I thought he seemed quieter and graver than before. I think, too, there was a certain pride in his manner.

He unfolded the proof of a large photograph, and we both looked at it in silence.

"Is it me?" I asked.

"Yes," he said quietly, "it is you," and we went on looking at it.

"The eyes," I said hesitatingly, "don't look very much like mine."

"Oh, no," he answered, "I've retouched them. They come out splendidly, don't they?"

"Fine," I said, "but surely my eyebrows are not like that?"

"No," said the photographer, with a momentary glance at my face, "the eyebrows are removed. We have a process now—the Delphide—for putting in new ones. You'll notice here where we've applied it to carry the hair away from the brow. I don't like the hair low on the skull."

"Oh, you don't, don't you?" I said.

"No," he went on, "I don't care for it. I like to get the hair clear back to the superficies and make out a new brow line."

"What about the mouth?" I said with a bitterness that was lost on the photographer; "is that mine?"

"It's adjusted a little," he said, "yours is too low. I found I couldn't use it."

"The ears, though," I said, "strike me as a good likeness; they're just like mine."

"Yes," said the photographer thoughtfully, "that's so; but I can fix that all right in the print. We have a process now—the Sulphide —for removing the ears entirely. I'll see if——"

"Listen!" I interrupted, drawing myself up and animating my features to their full extent and speaking with a withering scorn that should have blasted the man on the spot. "Listen! I came here for a photograph—a picture—something which (mad though it seems) would have looked like me. I wanted something that would depict my face as Heaven gave it to me, humble though the gift may have been. I wanted something that my friends might keep after my death, to reconcile them to my loss. It seems that I was mistaken. What I wanted is no longer done. Go on, then, with your brutal work. Take your negative, or whatever it is you call it,—dip it in sulphide, bromide, oxide, cowhide,— anything you like,—remove the eyes, correct the mouth, adjust the face, restore the lips, reanimate the necktie and reconstruct the waistcoat. Coat it with an inch of gloss, shade it, emboss it, gild it, till even you acknowledge that it is finished. Then when you have done all that—keep it for yourself and your friends. They may value it. To me it is but a worthless bauble."

I broke into tears and left.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE GENTLEMAN

Samuel McChord Crothers

"What is your favorite character, Gentle Reader?" "I like to read about gentlemen," he answers; "it's a taste I have inherited, and I find it growing upon me."

And yet it is not easy to define a gentleman, as the multitudes who have made the attempt can testify. It is one of the cases in which the dictionary does not help one. Perhaps, after all, definitions are to be looked upon as luxuries, not as necessities. When Alice told her name to Humpty Dumpty, that intolerable pedant asked,—

"'What does it mean?'

"'Must a name mean something?' Alice asked doubtfully.

"'Of course it must,' Humpty Dumpty said with a short laugh. 'My name means the shape I am,— and a good handsome shape it is, too.'"

I suppose that almost any man, if he were asked what a gentleman is, would answer with Humpty Dumpty, "It is the shape I am." I judge this because, though the average man would not feel insulted if you were to say, "You are no saint," it would not be safe to say, "You are no gentleman."

And yet the average man has his misgivings. For all his confident talk, he is very humble minded. The astral

body of the gentleman that he is endeavoring to project at his neighbors is not sufficiently materialized for his own imperfect vision. The word "gentleman" represents an ideal. Above whatever coarseness and sordidness there may be in actual life, there rises the ideal of a finer kind of man, with gentler manners and truer speech and braver action.

In every age we shall find the true gentleman—that is, the man who represents the best ideal of his own time, and we shall find the mimicry of him the would-be gentleman who copies the form while ignorant of the substance. These two characters furnish the material, on the one hand for the romancer, and on the other for the satirist. If there had been no real gentlemen, the epics, the solemn tragedies, and the stirring tales of chivalry would have remained unwritten; and if there had been no pretended gentlemen, the humorist would have lost many a pleasure. Always the contrasted characters are on the stage together; simple dignity is followed by strutting pomposity, and after the hero the braggart swaggers and storms. So ridicule and admiration bear rule by turns.

The idea of the gentleman involves the sense of personal dignity and worth. He is not a means to an end; he is an end in itself. How early this sense arose we may not know. Professor Huxley made merry over the sentimentalists who picture the simple dignity of primitive man. He had no admiration to throw away on "the dignified and unclothed savage sitting in solitary meditation under trees." And yet I am inclined to think that the gentleman must have appeared even before the advent of tailors. The peasants who followed Wat Tyler sang,—

> "When Adam delved and Eve span
> Who was then the gentleman?"

But a writer in the age of Queen Elizabeth published a book in which he argued that Adam himself was a perfect gentleman. He had the advantage, dear to the theological mind, that though affirmative proof might be lacking, it was equally difficult to prove the negative.

As civilization advances and literature catches its changing features, the outlines of the gentleman grow distinct.

In the Book of Genesis we see Abraham sitting at his tent door. Three strangers appear. When he sees them, he goes to meet them, and bows, and says to the foremost, "My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant. Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on."

There may have been giants in those days, and churls, and all manner of barbarians, but as we watch the strangers resting under the oak we say, "There were also gentlemen in those days." How simple it all is! It is like a single palm tree outlined against the desert and the sky.

We turn to the Analects of Confucius and we see the Chinese gentleman. Everything with him is exact.

The disciples of Confucius are careful to tell us how he adjusted the skirts of his robe before and behind, how he insisted that his mince-meat should be cut quite small and should have exactly the right proportion of rice, and that his mat must be laid straight before he would sit on it. Such details of deportment were thought very important. But we forget the mats and the mince-meat when we read: "Three things the master had not,—he had no prejudices, he had no obstinacy, he had no egotism." And we forget the fantastic garb and the stiff Chinese genuflections, and come to the conclusion that the true gentleman is as simple-hearted amid the etiquette of the court as in the tent in the desert, when we hear the master saying: "Sincerity is the way of Heaven; the wise are the unassuming. It is said of Virtue that over her embroidered robe she puts a plain single garment."

When we wish to see a masculine virtue which has no need of an embroidered garment we go to Plutarch's portrait gallery of antique gentlemen. What a breed of men they were! They were no holiday gentlemen. With the same lofty dignity they faced life and death. How superior they were to their fortunes. No wonder that men who had learned to conquer themselves conquered the world.

Most of Plutarch's worthies were gentlemen, though there were exceptions. There was, for example, Cato the Censor, who bullied the Roman youth into virtue, and got a statue erected to himself as the restorer of the good old manners. Poor Plutarch, who likes to do well by his heroes, is put to his wits' end to know what to do with testy, patriotic, honest, fearless, parsimonious Cato. Cato was undoubtedly a great man and a good citizen; but when we are told how he sold his old slaves, at a bargain, when they became infirm, and how he left his war-horse in Spain to save the cost of transportation, Plutarch adds, "Whether such things be an evidence of greatness or littleness of soul let the reader judge for himself." The judicious reader will conclude that it is possible to be a great man and a reformer, and yet not be quite a gentleman.

When the Roman Empire was destroyed the antique type of gentleman perished. The very names of the tribes which destroyed him have yet terrible associations. Goths, Vandals, Huns—to the civilized man of the fifth and sixth centuries these sounded like the names of wild beasts rather than of men. You might as well have said tigers, hyenas, wolves. The end had come of a civilization that had been the slow growth of centuries.

Yet out of these fierce tribes, destroyers of the old order, a new order was to arise. Out of chaos and night a new kind of gentleman was to be evolved. The romances of the Middle Ages are variations on a single theme, the appearance of the finer type of manhood and its struggle for existence. In the palace built by the enchantment of Merlin were four zones of sculpture.

"And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,
And in the second men are slaying beasts,
And on the third are warriors, perfect men,
And on the fourth are men with growing wings."

Europe was in the second stage, when men were slaying beasts and what was most brutal in humanity. If the higher manhood was to live, it must fight, and so the gentleman appears, sword in hand. Whether we are reading of Charlemagne and his paladins, or of Siegfried, or of Arthur, the story is the same. The gentleman has appeared. He has come into a waste land,

"Thick with wet woods and many a beast therein,
And none or few to scare or chase the beast."

He comes amid savage anarchy where heathen hordes are "reddening the sun with smoke and earth with blood." The gentleman sends forth his clear defiance. All this shall no longer be. He is ready to meet force with force; he is ready to stake his life upon the issue, the hazard of new fortunes for the race.

It is as a pioneer of the new civilization that the gentleman has pitched

"His tent beside the forest. And he drave
The heathen, and he slew the beast, and felled
The forest, and let in the sun."

The ballads and romances chronicle a struggle desperate in its beginning and triumphant in its conclusion. They are in praise of force, but it is a noble force. There is something better, they say, than brute force: it is manly force. The giant is no match for the gentleman.

If we would get at the mediæval idea of the gentleman, we must not listen merely to the romances as they are retold by men of genius in our own day. Scott and Tennyson clothe their characters in the old draperies, but their ideals are those of the nineteenth century rather than of the Middle Ages. Tennyson expressly disclaims the attempt to reproduce the King Arthur

"whose name, a ghost,
Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from mountain peak,
And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still; or him
Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Malleor's, one
Touched by the adulterous finger of a time
That hovered between war and wantonness."

When we go back and read Sir Thomas Malory's Morte Darthur, we find ourselves among men of somewhat different mould from the knights of Tennyson's idylls. It is not the blameless King Arthur, but the passionate Sir Launcelot, who wins admiration. We hear Sir Ector crying over Launcelot's body, "Ah, Launcelot, thou wert the head of the Christian knights. Thou wert the courtliest knight that ever bare shield; and thou wert the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrode horse; and thou wert the truest lover for a sinful man that ever loved woman; and thou wert the kindest man that ever strake with sword; and thou wert the goodliest person that ever came among press of knights; and thou wert the meekest man and the gentlest that ever ate in hall with ladies; and thou wert the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear in the rest."

We must take, not one of these qualities, but all of them together, to understand the gentleman of those ages when good and evil struggled so fiercely for the mastery. No saint was this Sir Launcelot. There was in him no fine balance of virtues, but only a wild tumult of the blood. He was

proud, self-willed, passionate, pleasure-loving; capable of great sin and of sublime expiation. What shall we say of this gentlest, sternest, kindest, goodliest, sinfulest of knights,—this man who knew no middle path, but who, when treading in perilous places and following false lights, yet draws all men admiringly to himself?

We can only say this: he was the prototype of those mighty men who were the makers of the modern world. They were the men who fought with Charlemagne, and with William the Conqueror, and with Richard; they were the men who "beat down the heathen, and upheld the Christ;" they were the men from whom came the crusades, and the feudal system, and the great charter. As we read the history, we say at one moment, "These men were mail-clad ruffians," and at the next, "What great-hearted gentlemen!"

Perhaps the wisest thing would be to confess to both judgments at once. In this stage of his evolution the gentleman may boast of feats that would now be rehearsed only in bar-rooms. This indicates that the standard of society has improved, and that what was possible once for the nobler sort of men is now characteristic of the baser sort. The modern rowdy frequently appears in the cast-off manners of the old-time gentleman. Time, the old-clothes man, thus furnishes his customers with many strange misfits. What is of importance is that through these transition years there was a ceaseless struggle to preserve the finer types of manhood.

The ideal of the mediæval gentleman was expressed in the word "gallantry." The essence of gallantry is courage; but it is not the sober courage of the stoic. It is courage charged with qualities that give it sparkle and effervescence. It is the courage that not only faces danger, but delights in it. What suggestions of physical and mental elasticity are in Shakespeare's description of the "springing, brave Plantagenet"! Scott's lines express the gallant spirit:—

> "One crowded hour of glorious life
> Is worth an age without a name."

Gallantry came to have another implication, equally characteristic. The knight was gallant not only in war, but in love also. There had come a new worship, the worship of woman. In the Church it found expression in the adoration of the Madonna, but in the camp and the court it found its place as well. Chivalry was the elaborate and often fantastic ritual, and the gentleman was minister at the altar. The ancient gentleman stood alone; the mediæval gentleman offered all to the lady of his love. Here, too, gallantry implied the same overflowing joy in life. If you are anxious to have a test by which to recognize the time when you are growing old,—so old that imagination is chilled within you,—I should advise you to turn to the chapter in the Romance of King Arthur entitled "How Queen Guenever went maying with certain Knights of the Table Round, clad all in green." Then read: "So it befell in the month of May, Queen Guenever called unto her knights and she gave them warning that early upon

the morrow she would ride maying into the woods and fields besides Westminster, and I warn you that none of you but that he be well horsed and that ye all be clothed in green. . . . I shall bring with me ten ladies and every knight shall have a squire and two yeomen. So upon the morn they took their horses with the Queen and rode on maying through the woods and meadows in great joy and delights."

If you cannot see them riding on, a gallant company over the meadows, and if you hear no echoes of their laughter, and if there is no longer any enchantment in the vision of that time when all were "blithe and debonair," then undoubtedly you are growing old. It is time to close the romances: perhaps you may still find solace in Young's "Night Thoughts" or Pollok's "Course of Time." Happy are they who far into the seventies still see Queen Guenever riding in the pleasant month of May: these are they who have found the true fountain of youth.

The gentleman militant will always be the hero of ballads and romances; and in spite of the apostles of realism, I fancy he has not lost his charm. There are Jeremiahs of evolution, who tell us that after a time men will be so highly developed as to have neither hair nor teeth. In that day, when the operating dentists have ceased from troubling, and given way to the manufacturing dentists, and the barbers have been superseded by the wig-makers, it is quite possible that the romances may give place to some tedious department of comparative mythology. In that day, Chaucer's knight who "loved chevalrie, trouthe and honour, fredom and curtesie," will be forgotten, though his armor on the museum walls will be learnedly described. But that dreadful day is still far distant; before it comes, not only teeth and hair must be improved out of existence, but a substitute must be found for good red blood. Till that time "no laggard in love or dastard in war" can steal our hearts from young Lochinvar.

The sixteenth century marks an epoch in the history of the gentleman, as in all else. Old ideas disappear, to come again in new combinations. Familiar words take on meanings that completely transform them. The same hands wielded the sword and the pen. The scholars, the artists, the poets, began to feel a sense of personal worth, and carried the gallant spirit of the gentleman into their work. They were not mere specialists, but men of action. The artist was not only an instrument to give pleasure to others, but he was himself a centre of admiration. Out of this new consciousness how many interesting characters were produced! There were men who engaged in controversies as if they were tournaments, and who wrote books and painted pictures and carved statues, not in the spirit of professionalism, but as those who would in this activity enjoy "one crowded hour of glorious life." Very frequently, these gentlemen and scholars, and gentlemen and artists, overdid the matter, and were more belligerent in disposition than were the warriors with whom they began to claim equality.

To this self-assertion we owe the most delightful of autobiographies,—that of Benvenuto Cellini. He aspired to be not only an artist, but a fine gentleman. No one could be more certain of the sufficiency of Humpty Dumpty's definition of a gentleman than was he.

If we did not have his word for it, we could scarcely believe that any one could be so valiant in fight and so uninterrupted in the pursuit of honor without its interfering with his professional work. Take, for example, that memorable day when, escaping from the magistrates, he makes an attack upon the household of his enemy, Gherardo Guascanti. "I found them at table; and Gherardo, who had been the cause of the quarrel, flung himself upon me. I stabbed him in the breast, piercing doublet and jerkin, but doing him not the least harm in the world." After this attack, and after magnanimously pardoning Gherardo's father, mother, and sisters, he says: "I ran storming down the staircase, and when I reached the street, I found all the rest of the household, more than twelve persons: one of them seized an iron shovel, another a thick iron pipe; one had an anvil, some hammers, some cudgels. When I got among them, raging like a mad bull, I flung four or five to the earth, and fell down with them myself, continually aiming my dagger now at one, and now at another. Those who remained upright plied with both hands with all their force, giving it me with hammers, cudgels, and the anvil; but inasmuch as God does sometimes mercifully intervene, he so ordered that neither they nor I did any harm to one another."

What fine old days those were, when the toughness of skin matched so wonderfully the stoutness of heart! One has a suspicion that in these degenerate times, were a family dinner-party interrupted by such an avalanche of daggers, cudgels, and anvils, some one would be hurt. As for Benvenuto, he does not so much as complain of a headache.

There is an easy, gentleman-like grace in the way in which he recounts his incidental homicides. When he is hiding behind a hedge at midnight, waiting for the opportunity to assassinate his enemies, his heart is open to all the sweet influences of nature, and he enjoys "the glorious heaven of stars." He was not only an artist and a fine gentleman, but a saint as well, and "often had recourse with pious heart to holy prayers." Above all, he had the indubitable evidence of sainthood, a halo. "I will not omit to relate another circumstance, which is perhaps the most remarkable that ever happened to any one. I do so in order to justify the divinity of God and of his secrets, who deigned to grant me this great favor: forever since the time of my strange vision until now, an aureole of glory (marvelous to relate) has rested on my head. This is visible to every sort of man to whom I have chosen to point it out, but these have been few." He adds ingenuously, "I am always able to see it." He says, "I first became aware of it in France, at Paris; for the air in those parts is so much freer from mists that one can see it far better than in Italy."

Happy Benvenuto with his Parisian halo, which did not interfere with the manly arts of self-defense! His self-complacency was possible only in a stage of evolution when the saint and the assassin were not altogether clearly differentiated. Some one has said, "Give me the luxuries of life, and I can get along without the necessities." Like many of his time, Benvenuto had all the luxuries that belong to the character of a Christian gentleman, though he was destitute of the necessities. An appreciation of common honesty as an essential to a gentleman seems to be more slowly developed than the more romantic sentiment that is called honor.

The evolution of the gentleman has its main line of progress where there is a constant though slow advance; but, on the other hand, there are arrested developments, and quaint survivals, and abortive attempts.

In each generation there have been men of fashion who have mistaken themselves for gentlemen. They are uninteresting enough while in the flesh, but after a generation or two they become very quaint and curious, when considered as specimens. Each generation imagines that it has discovered a new variety, and invents a name for it. The dude, the swell, the dandy, the fop, the spark, the macaroni, the blade, the popinjay, the coxcomb,—these are butterflies of different summers. There is here endless variation, but no advancement. One fashion comes after another, but we cannot call it better. One would like to see representatives of the different generations together in full dress. What variety in oaths and small talk! What anachronisms in swords and canes and eye-glasses, in ruffles, in collars, in wigs! What affluence in powders and perfumes and colors! But "will they know each other there"? The real gentlemen would be sure to recognize each other. Abraham and Marcus Aurelius and Confucius would find much in common. Launcelot and Sir Philip Sidney and Chinese Gordon would need no introduction. Montaigne and Mr. Spectator and the Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table would fall into delightful chat. But would a "swell" recognize a "spark"? And might we not expect a "dude" to fall into immoderate laughter at the sight of a "popinjay"?

Fashion has its revenges. Nothing seems so ridiculous to it as an old fashion. The fop has no toleration for the obsolete foppery. The artificial gentleman is as inconceivable out of his artificial surroundings as the waxen-faced gentleman of the clothing store outside his show window.

There was Beau Nash, for example,—a much-admired person in his day, when he ruled from his throne in the pump-room in Bath. Everything was in keeping. There was Queen Anne architecture, and Queen Anne furniture, and Queen Anne religion, and the Queen Anne fashion in fine gentlemen. What a curious piece of bricabrac this fine gentleman was, to be sure! He was not fitted for any useful purpose under the sun, but in his place he was quite ornamental, and undoubtedly very expensive. Art was as self-complacent as if nature had never been invented. What multitudes of the

baser sort must be employed in furnishing the fine gentleman with clothes! All Bath admired the way in which Beau Nash refused to pay for them. Once when a vulgar tradesman insisted on payment, Nash compromised by lending him twenty pounds,—which he did with the air of a prince. So great was the impression he made upon his time that a statue was erected to him, while beneath were placed the busts of two minor contemporaries, Pope and Newton. This led Lord Chesterfield to write:—

> "This statue placed the busts between
> Adds to the satire strength,
> Wisdom and wit are little seen,
> But folly at full length."

Lord Chesterfield himself had nothing in common with the absurd imitation gentlemen, and yet the gentleman whom he described and pretended to admire was altogether artificial. He was the Machiavelli of the fashionable world. He saw through it, and recognized its hollowness; but such as it was it must be accepted. The only thing was to learn how to get on in it. "In courts you may expect to meet connections without friendships, enmities without hatred, honor without virtue, appearances saved and realities sacrificed, good manners and bad morals."

There is something earnestly didactic about Lord Chesterfield. He gives line upon line, and precept upon precept, to his "dear boy." Never did a Puritan father teach more conscientiously the shorter catechism than did he the whole duty of the gentleman, which was to save appearances even though he must sacrifice reality. "My dear boy," he writes affectionately, "I advise you to trust neither man nor woman more than is absolutely necessary. Accept proffered friendships with great civility, but with great incredulity."

No youth was more strenuously prodded up the steep and narrow path of virtue than was little Philip Stanhope up the steep and narrow path of fashion. Worldliness made into a religion was not without its asceticism. "Though you think you dance well, do not think you dance well enough. Though you are told that you are genteel, still aim at being genteeler. . . . Airs, address, manners, graces, are of such infinite importance and are so essentially necessary to you that now, as the time of meeting draws near, I tremble for fear that I may not find you possessed of them."

Lord Chesterfield's gentleman was a man of the world; but it was, after all, a very hard and empty world. It was a world that had no eternal laws, only changing fashions. It had no broken hearts, only broken vows. It was a world covered with glittering ice, and the gentleman was one who had learned to skim over its dangerous places, not caring what happened to those who followed him.

It is a relief to get away from such a world, and, leaving the fine gentleman behind, to take the rumbling stagecoach to the estates of Sir Roger de Coverley. His is not the great world at all, and his interests are limited to his own parish. But it is a real world, and much better suited to a real gentleman. His fashions are not the fashions of the court, but

they are the fashions that wear. Even when following the hounds Sir Roger has time for friendly greetings. "The farmers' sons thought themselves happy if they could open a gate for the good old knight, which he requited with a nod or a smile, and a kind inquiry after their fathers and uncles."

But even dear old Roger de Coverley cannot rest undisturbed as an ideal gentleman. He belonged, after all, to a privileged order, and there is a force at work to destroy all social privileges. A generation of farmers' sons must arise not to be so easily satisfied with a kindly nod and smile. Liberty, fraternity, and equality have to be reckoned with. Democracy has come with its leveling processes.

"The calm Olympian height
Of ancient order feels its bases yield."

In a revolutionary period the virtues of an aristocracy become more irritating than their vices. People cease to attribute merit to what comes through good fortune. No wonder that the disciples of the older time cry:—

"What hope for the fine-nerved humanities
That made earth gracious once with gentler arts?"

What becomes of the gentleman in an age of democratic equality? Just what becomes of every ideal when the time for its fulfillment has come. It is freed from its limitations and enters into a larger life.

Let us remember that the gentleman was always a lover of equality, and of the graces that can only grow in the society of equals. The gentleman of an aristocracy is at his best only when he is among his peers. There is a little circle within which there is no pushing, no assumption of superiority. Each member seeks not his own, but finds pleasure in a gracious interchange of services.

But an aristocracy leaves only a restricted sphere for such good manners. Outside the group to which he belongs the gentleman is compelled by imperious custom to play the part of a superior being. It has always been distasteful and humiliating to him. It is only an essentially vulgar nature that can really be pleased with the servility of others.

An ideal democracy is a society in which good manners are universal. There is no arrogance and no cringing, but social intercourse is based on mutual respect. This ideal democracy has not been perfected, but the type of men who are creating it has already been evolved. Among all the crude and sordid elements of modern life, we see the stirring of a new chivalry. It is based on a recognition of the worth and dignity of the common man.

Milton in memorable words points out the transition which must take place from the gentleman of romance to the gentleman of enduring reality. After narrating how, in his youth, he betook himself "to those lofty fables and romances which recount in solemn cantos the deeds of knighthood founded by our victorious kings and thence had in renown through all Christendom," he says, "This my mind gave me that every free and gentle spirit, without that oath ought to be born a knight, nor needed to expect a gilt spur or the laying on of a sword upon his shoulder."

A BOY'S BOOK RAMBLES

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Three kinds of companions—men, women and books,
Were enough, said the elderly Sage, for his ends.

At least so he was quoted by Andrew Lang, who was a delightful man, a book lover, and a fisherman. The inference from this remark is that the "elderly sage" has a corner on these companions. He has not. The boys and girls who are neither "elderly" nor "sage" can make claim at least to books as companions. I will admit that men and women rarely form companions for boys and girls. When we were little our mother and father were about all the grown up associates we had. Occasionally some male guest would "meteorlike flash lawless through the void", and assume for us a brief aspect of companionship. One of these in particular sticks in my mind. He was an Australian. I have forgotten his name. All through one lazy summer afternoon he told us fascinating stories of man eating sharks. Another, a political friend of my father, recited to us, with great feeling and proper emphasis on the bloody part, the battle of Lake Regillus. Naturally, he too endeared himself to us very much. In the main, however, our grown up companions consisted of my parents. It was they who introduced us to the third in the list given by Andrew Lang, namely, "books".

Ours was a household built around two book lovers. I could no more imagine my mother and father without a book by them than I could imagine Queen Elizabeth without a ruff. Their reading was omnivorous. Their tastes, however, led them along somewhat different lines. My mother was particularly fond of poetry and memoirs. She was also a real student of the Elizabethan dramatists. I think I have never met anyone better versed in their plays. My first glimpses of the grandeur of Marlowe's "mighty line" and of the sweetness of Beaumont and Fletcher's "Faithful Shepherdess" were given me by her. My father's taste ran more toward history and science, in the broadest sense of the term. He loved poetry, but inclined toward the epic or ballad type, the "Chanson de Roland", or the "Saga of King Olaf". He also loved a good detective story or one about boxing. Both of them felt that books were a part of everyday life, not a thing apart from it. We therefore talked about them at meals, named dogs or nicknamed people from characters in them, and chanted sonorously the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" or some kindred verses, when we rode horseback. We were taught to be careful of books, but books did not gather the dust at Sagamore Hill.

There are two ways in which children become acquainted with books: they are read aloud to, or read to themselves. Books were read to me when I was very little, long before I could read myself. This reading aloud was done in the main by Mother. Father did not have the time. It was

by this method that I first came to know a book that not only played a large part in my childhood but has remained a steadfast friend ever since, "Pilgrim's Progress". Mother read it to me in her room in the late afternoons. She sat in a comfortable rocking chair and I sat in her lap. By us there was a mirror that belonged originally to her grandfather. It was, according to modern standards, a rather small mirror, but when it was first brought to this country it was considered so remarkable for its size that strangers passing on the streets of New York used to ring the door bell and ask to have it shown them. There in Mother's room, rocking to and fro, I first met Christian, Faithful, Valiant-for-Truth, and all the other living allegories that go to make up that very remarkable work. I can remember to this day my genuine grief over the sad fate of Faithful at Vanity Fair, and my intense excitement over the Giant Despair. Mother did not read this book to me once and then put it away; she read it to me again and again, as a book of such value should be read. I think, of all my early books, Bunyan's masterpiece has the greatest influence on me. Like good food, it "stuck to the ribs", and I have continued to read and reread it ever since. Of course, in those days, the allegory entirely escaped me. The characters were to me real men and women. Like many another book, I believe it is read by a child with one viewpoint, and later by that same child, when grown up, with an entirely different viewpoint.

Among other books that Mother read to me were Scott's novels, selections from Hawthorne, much of Washington Irving, and poetry of all sorts and kinds. As I think of those times a veritable procession passes through my mind. Irving's "Conquest of Granada" stands ticketed by itself, because it was read to me during periods of unwilling inactivity forced on us children immediately after lunch by family edict. "The Red Fisherman" introduced me first to Praed. "Ivanhoe" I remember chiefly because I had great difficulty in keeping from bursting into tears at the fate which so nearly overtook the Old Jew. This would never have done, since my sister was there, and before one's sister it is permissible to cry only with rage. From "The Talisman" I got an affection and loyalty for Richard Cœur de Lion that stubbornly resisted for many years the cold facts of history on that far from estimable man. At that time also many fairy stories were read to me. The ones that I cared for most were those of Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen. Next to these I think I liked Joel Chandler Harris's stories. They were coming out, as I recall it, in the Sunday "Sun". Mother used to read them to all of us each Sunday. Last, but not least, the Bible was of course read to us. I suppose I got a great deal out of it by absorption, but I did not care for it nearly so much as I did for "Pilgrim's Progress" or "Little Mister Thimble-finger". The parts of the Good Book I liked were the bloody battles. I liked Jehu, the son of Nimshi, who drove furiously. I liked Saul, David, Ahab, and Deborah. As far as the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes,

and Songs of Solomon were concerned, I merely tolerated them.

These books that were read aloud to me formed the cornerstone of my later reading.

Akin to reading aloud was the way my father gave me an insight into various bits of literature and history. As I have said, ordinarily he did not have enough time to read to us. But upon special occasions he did. Once when my mother was sick he acted, as he termed it, as "vice mother" and read "Rob Roy" to us. At rare intervals he would read us poetry. The poems were those which he himself liked, generally of a martial strain. Once he read "The Old Sergeant" by Willson, with great emphasis. It struck me as a very sad poem but as one that I liked particularly. The other day I read it to an assorted group of my own children. I am sorry to say I don't think they liked it as much as I did.

Reading aloud, however, was not the usual course of events with my father. He used rather to recite poems or narrate incidents of history. The first poetry that I got by heart he taught me in this fashion. That was, of course, when I was very little, before I knew how to read. While he was dressing in the evening, I would come to his room. There he would teach me the poems of which he was fond, by word of mouth, as the old minstrels taught. Sometimes, in learning poems in this way, I got words or phrases wrong and did not find out what was correct until, at a later date, I read the original. In "The Rhyme of the Three Sealers" by Kipling, there is a line that runs:

> And we'll come into the game again—
> with a double deck to play.

Until I read the poem to myself, I thought it was "doubled fiist", not "a double deck". I knew nothing about cards then, but I did know that when you were mad you doubled your fist. Among the poems that Father taught me were "Sheridan's Ride", "The Sinking of the Cumberland", "The Rhyme of the Three Sealers", and fragments of the "Saga of King Olaf". Of these, I liked particularly the "Saga of King Olaf". Like all children, I invariably placed myself as one of the characters in whatever book or poem I might be reading. In this "Saga" I was always undecided as to whether I wished to be Olaf or Einar. I was quite sad because my hair was short and brown and interfered with my sense of identity with Einar when I would chant to myself those lines:

> Loose his golden locks were flying, bright his
> armor gleamed,—
> Like St. Michael overthrowing Lucifer, he
> seemed.

I used to envy my brother Kermit his golden hair. As soon as I learned to read, I got a funny little old fashioned, battered, blue-covered copy of Longfellow and read the entire "Saga". From that time to the present day, I have always taken great pleasure in this poem. There are many who sniff at it and say it is not poetry, but to me it has a real ring of arms. In it I can see those far removed ancestors of ours with their virtues and their failings.

In addition to teaching me poetry, Father used to describe to me various of the great battles of history. When I walked down to his office in Wash-

ington with him, at the age of six or seven, he used to draw plans of these battles for me, in the dust of the gutter, with an umbrella tip or with the toe of his boot. As soon as I had learned to read easily, I searched for the histories in which I could find the account of these battles, and studied them.

Before I could read, therefore, Mother and Father had introduced me to certain books and poems, all of which stuck in my mind and gave a trend to my reading. If I were to pick the two which were most constantly in my thought, I should select the "Saga of King Olaf", among the poems, and among the books, by all odds, "Pilgrim's Progress".

After those early days I began to read to myself more and more. We children used to read in our rooms after being sent upstairs to bed. It was before the days of electric lights, and we had to read by candles. Mother always made the rounds of the children's rooms before she went to bed to see that everything was all right. When we heard her coming we would hastily blow out the candle, put the book under the pillow, and pretend to be asleep. Mother had far too many children, however, to be so easily hoodwinked. She would sniff the air, and if she could detect the smell of a recently extinguished candle no excuses went. When we moved to Albany in '99, after my father had been elected governor, we found electric light in the governor's house. This was the first time we had ever had electric lights. They were a godsend to us children, for, since an extinguished electric light leaves no smell, they meant we were safe from detection.

At this time, I wandered all over the place in my reading. I picked up a lot of Indian folk tales in various collections. I was inspired by George Bird Grinnell, who gave me his book "Blackfoot Lodge Tales". From these I drifted, naturally, to tales of adventure, such as "Jack, the Young Ranchman", "The Painted Desert", "Afloat in a Forest", "The Swiss Family Robinson", and dear old "Robinson Crusoe". "Blackfoot Lodge Tales" did me a real service, for it started me on folk lore and culture myths, which I have read and studied ever since.

Meanwhile, largely through the impetus given to my thoughts by my father, I became interested in natural history. That, of course, opened up an endless vista of reading. I read books on birds, on animals, on insects. I met John Burroughs, Frank Chapman, and many another, at this time. The pursuit, curiously enough, led me indirectly to one of the books that influenced me very greatly. One day, when I was talking about natural history to Mother, she suggested that I read "The Cruise of the Beagle". I did, and liked it very much. Upon putting it back in the bookcase, I noticed next to it "The Origin of Species". Since I had enjoyed the former, I took a chance on the latter. It was hard going, but by appealing to my father for the meaning of puzzling passages, I got the general drift. It led me, at a later day, to much reading along the same lines.

A short while after, I found Gibbon. His acquaintance was also due

to chance. Like all families, we had some remnants of inherited libraries composed of sets, of which Father and Mother already had copies. One day, my aunt Emily was looking over some old books, boxed in the attic, which had been left her. Among them, in brown covers, was a set of Gibbon. I stood handy, and fell heir to it. From pride of possession, as much as anything else, I burrowed into the first volume. It fascinated me. Here was no dry-as-dust history where dates and constitutional acts followed one another in dreary rotation. Here was a history written in such a manner that the characters leaped from the pages as living people. It provided me with the backbone of my reading for one entire summer. It permanently fixed my preference for historians like Greene, Freeman, or Macaulay, and against such as Hume or Mommsen.

Meanwhile, of course, I was wandering with delight through poetry. In poetry, my taste ran very much along the line of my father's. Martial ballads appealed to me most. There is now on my bookshelf at home a treasured volume of "Poems of American Patriotism" collected by Brander Matthews. He gave it to me when I was six years old. His signature on the flyleaf is witnessed by H. C. Bunner and W. D. Howells. Scott's verses also I loved. I used to shout them while taking my cold bath in the morning. Hopping up and down on the slippery floor of the "splash closet", testing the shower with one toe, I accompanied Buccleuch and won the "valley of Esk from its mouth to its source". At times, as I rode on my pony through the lovely Oyster Bay woods, I pursued the Stag with "two dogs of black St. Hubert's breed". At others, with Macaulay's Grey Charger I sought "the southern mountains, the mountains of my home", or else I "brought the good news from Ghent to Aix". The "Ballad Book" and Percy's "Reliques" also furnished many characters for country-living children to impersonate.

In those days a book was a book. I had no feeling that its age or association contributed anything to it above what the printed word gave.

> Old books are best! with what delight
> Does "Faithorne fecit" greet our sight—

meant nothing to me. The delights of first editions, of the smell of old leather, of autographed copies, were all reserved for later years.

Such, in brief, are some of my early book memories. They came early, for, as I have said, Father and Mother believed that books were an important part of life. I have carried these memories only down to the year I was twelve, for then occurred the first great break in my life. I went to boarding school and other influences and associations began to be felt. I cannot place my hand definitely on any particular thing that any individual book has helped me to accomplish. I do know this—that they have been an endless source of pleasure to me through every chance or mischance. I cannot help but feel also that "Pilgrim's Progress", the "Saga of King Olaf", Gibbon's history, and "The Origin of Species" make very good, sturdy companions for anyone traveling through life.

CHINA THE ETERNAL

Pearl S. Buck

I said to myself, as the old junk was towed slowly through the wandering canal, that China had not changed after all. And I was glad. The indolent toiler in the neighboring field looked up from his clods with the same vacant interest as we passed, his blue coat cast aside and his brown back shining in the morning sun. The little villages were as sleepy and as dirty as ever they were in the old days, with their swarms of dusty children sprawling in the streets, naked and cheerful. Mothers gossiped in the doorways, their shuttles twisting gently with the spinning of coarse cotton thread, and they stopped occasionally to unfasten a well-worn button when a toddling youngster's hungry mouth came nuzzling. The old grandmothers and grandfathers doddered and dozed against a mud wall, in the hot sunshine and flies, and all was peace.

It was even reassuring to have a mangy yellow dog rush at me from the bank with startling directness. Evidently foreigners were infrequent still. I might go back to my home then in the drowsy little old interior city and be quiet again, shut away forever, if I liked, from the incessant turmoil of progress as the West sees it. For I was very weary of screaming locomotives and factory whistles, of swerving automobiles and the frantic rushing-about of too many people with strained eyes and tightened lips and restless laughter that was not gay—of all those things which are to be found in the centres of the world.

To be sure, I had been rather dismayed when I stepped off the train at Liuyang. There had not been a train there when I left. A cigarette was an awesome thing and a dangerous innovation, and the most foreign object in the place had been a decrepit silk hat owned by the magistrate. Now I stepped off the Blue Express, if you please, and was received into the literal bosom of a swarm of blue-uniformed railway coolies, who seized my bags and bore them off, even as others of their kind had done in New York and London. I was dazed, and only a primitive desire to cling to my possessions urged me on. The Chinese equivalent of "Keb, sir?" and "Taxi! Taxi!" was shouted at me as I was deposited on a brief stretch of asphalt walk, and I sat myself in a luxurious new ricksha and was borne down the street.

That street! I had left it a delightful, ambling old thing, lined with junkshops and bakeshops and coffin-shops, all in deep, one-story buildings open to the street, and with all sorts of queer and astounding sights and smells. There was never such a thing as a policeman, and at any time of day the most interesting brawls took place between long-queued coolies, with such fervid cursing of ancestors that genealogies were bandied about until a fight sounded like one of the "begat" chapters out of Genesis. These quarrels were a pleasure and recreation for the whole community,

and every man in the immediate neighborhood laid down his business and hurried to the scene, agog with anticipated excitement. Fortune-tellers' booths were tucked into the great gate of the city wall, and there on a hot summer day in the cool shady depths of the thirty-foot-thick arch one might find the most delicious watermelons, rosy and dewy, and split open to tempt a man to his last penny and a mighty stomach-ache.

Well, it was quite different now. A chubby-faced young policeman in a prodigiously starched white uniform promenaded the street with a fixed bayonet and immense dignity. The little dirty quaint shops were gone, and in their stead were plate-glass windows with gay displays of tawdry Japanese and Western produce: hats, shoes, watches, spectacles, ties, ribbons, face powders, scents, and rouge —everything a very young American college boy or girl with exceptionally loud tastes might long to possess. And then into the city gate, all swept and garnished, and all the old blind fortune tellers gone with their scrolls and cryptic rhymes and strange geomancers' tools. No watermelons any more, nor anything save huge cigarette-posters plastering those dark and ancient bricks and defiling their sombre age with crass and glaring colors.

Thus it was that I stepped on the old junk with a sense of relief to be borne a week away into the interior. Day after day had slipped past, leisurely and still. I had watched the quiet evening light flow through old curved bridges and had seen the bowed figures of homeward passers black against the golden sky. I never saw even a wheelbarrow; only the lumbering old oxcarts, their drivers cracking long whips over the sluggish, unmoved oxen as they paced slowly along the dusty country roads. At night wild geese flew low against the horizon, fearless in this harmless land, and occasionally even at high noon the canal bobbed with tiny teal-ducks, diving and fluttering and unafraid of the women beating clothes on the stones at the water's edge.

Restful and unstirred this countryside, whose inhabitants knew and cared nothing beyond what their forefathers had known and loved and lived by. Their greatest excitement was a market day, with a juggler and a troupe of traveling actors, with a repertoire of historical plays and threadbare costumes, for amusement. For worship, the bowing before the tablets in the old ancestral hall, a bit of incense at the temple when one was sick, and a sacrifice of cakes and fruit and rice wine at New Year's or to the moon god in the eighth month. Otherwise the steady length of days with the leisurely tilling of rich fields and the receiving again of generous harvests. Occasionally there was a flood of swirling, muddy water from that old sorrow, the Yellow River, and then there was a year of bitterness, stoically borne, and they buried their dead.

Life ran very deep and still in this hidden corner of the world. Death and birth, misfortune and prosperity, were known and shared by all in utter simplicity and with no display beyond the fixed stateliness of ancient customs.

Then came I again to my little old city. It was quite unchanged, I thought. The junk was moored to a stout peg in the bank and I walked down the gangplank and along the foot of the city wall to the gate. It was the same as ever. I remembered the vines springing from every crevice, and the determined little pine wresting a scanty living from between the bricks. It had grown and spread to the top of the wall.

I passed through the gate and down the cobbles of the main street. The same old hot-water shops, and then the blacksmith's shop, with the bellows still squeaking and the fire flaming behind the half-naked apprentices, beating a twisted, glowing piece of iron. I stood and watched a minute, and they wrought the molten mass into a ploughshare before my eyes. The old blacksmith looked up and gave me a sooty smile from his blackened face and a casual word of welcome home again. Five years was little to him. There was such a lot of time. It was never either long or short—just natural.

Curious faces, friendly faces, familiar faces—all just the same, thank God. An old deaf sewing-woman recognized me and greeted me affectionately:—

"You are back? It is good. We hear there is fighting and distress abroad and we feared for you. Now you are safe. There is peace here." And she patted my hand.

"No bandits?" I asked.

"Oh yes, outside the city," she answered calmly, "but we lock the gates at night and are safe enough. Anyway, they are not so dangerous as the fire engines and strange spirit-machines of which I hear. Ah, you have seen many things, I doubt not, which would frighten an old woman like me, in those wild, foreign countries. Well, you are home again now, and here everything is as always and we are safe."

Yet not many days passed before I began to wonder. Was it all the same? To be sure, the shell of the city was unchanged—the houses, the streets, the old temple, the market-places teeming and bickering and brawling. My old friends came to see me as before, and we had leisurely and dignified talk of many things as we sipped our tea, and nibbled the little sesame cakes. But the heart of things was stirring. There was a strangeness, for instance, when old Mr. Ch'u stopped smoking a water pipe and took to flippant little cigarettes, and his wife solemnly lit a huge black cigar in my living-room. The sight of that dainty, fragile, tiny old soul in a silver-gray satin coat and a pleated black silk skirt holding in her slender fingers a cigar fit only for a Western business man, and a fat one at that, was rather overwhelming. I could not reconcile the delicate, aged lips strained about the ugly thing. But evidently it was not the first time, and the old pair felt themselves in the height of Shanghai style.

Or take Li Chi T'ien, the only son of the white-haired artist on the Street of the Three Temples. The family have always been students and artists and teachers.

"What are you studying, Li Chi T'ien?" I asked, amazed to see such a sturdy specimen before me. I had left

him a thin, dreamy lad, always immaculate in pale silk robes.

"Agriculture," he laughed, answering me in English. "At the University. Great stuff! We do much practical work." The explanation of the browned skin and bright eyes, then.

"Why agriculture?" I asked curiously.

"China needs the practical science," he replied firmly.

"What does your father say?" I asked again, looking at the boy's hard hands and short nails. He had had such soft hands before, white as lotus buds, with long, transparent nails.

"Oh," replied the youth nonchalantly, "he does not like at first. But what to do? We students are modern. China must become modern. We wish to adopt the good of the West. We must make China now, we young."

Or old Mrs. Ch'en. Now old Mrs. Ch'en was an ardent Buddhist and very antiforeign. Only a chance to help a sick child had given me the entrance to the proud, conservative house. Even at that, I could never quite forget that she deplored my misfortune in being of a white-skinned, light-eyed race. She received me in state always in her handsome guest-hall, dusky with age and the darkness of rich old carved beams and pillars. I never dared admire freely the heavy brass candlesticks on the long redwood table under the ancient painting of a Ming emperor, or the deep jade urn. These things were family heirlooms, too precious to be mentioned by a mere outsider. But this time when I made my deep obeisance she took my hand lightly, and laughing said:—

"I too have been a traveler since we met."

"Yes?" I said interrogatively.

"Yes," she replied, seating herself and waving me carelessly to a chair. This in itself was astounding enough, for heretofore the polite preliminaries to seating ourselves had been endless.

"Yes," she continued, cracking a watermelon seed skillfully, "I went to Peking to have my sickness cut out. You had heard I had a sickness?" I shook my head.

"Oh yes, a terrible sickness. It grew in me as big as that," she measured off about a foot of space. "My husband being dead, I asked his next brother, who is head of the family now, if I might go to Peking to have it cut out. You see, I had taken medicine from every doctor in town—oh, the very best medicine; centipede heads, even, and the milk of a young mother with her first child, and all to no avail. My son came home from Peking University then, and he said the foreigners could cut it out so that I should be quite well. You can imagine how afraid I was. I would not even hear of it, until I began to see that it would be either my sickness or my life, and my son said he would stand beside me and promised that he would let them take nothing from me except the sickness. For, you know, it is said the foreigners wish for our hearts to make medicine. Although I no longer wholly believe that now.

"Well, the head of the family refused to let me go. He said it was better to die respectably than to go to a foreign devil. I just waited until he was ill one time with his opium,

and I went with my son secretly. Such a white, white place, the hospital! And I slept peacefully throughout the cutting, and knew nothing more until I found myself in a bed like snow for whiteness, with the sickness beside me on the table in a bottle. I brought it home and here it is."

And there it truly was, in the place of honor between the jade urn and the candlesticks, a large bottle of alcohol with a ghastly, red-veined tumor within. But meanwhile old Mrs. Ch'en is quite reconciled to foreigners. The operation was evidently the event of her life, and people come from far and near to see the marvel of a sickness safely imprisoned in a bottle. She has become famous, and reigns in conscious distinction among her townspeople.

Such things have set me thinking rather idly as to what the West has really done to China. Has the invasion of a foreign civilization a menace in it for this ancient and honorable race? Is there danger of denationalizing them with the dazzle of our brilliant, effervescent life? I do not think of the commercial pacts and treaties by which we have blackened ourselves in many ways. I mean that subtler touch of personalities, the dominating arrogance of the Anglo-Saxon upon the apparent passivity of the Oriental. How is it working out, and what have we to fear for the Chinese?

Well, many things, superficially. I think first of this freedom of the sexes which is sweeping over us. It is an intoxicating thing to young men unaccustomed to even casual contact with erstwhile shy and modest maidens to find themselves in the coeducational colleges which are springing up in the large centres in China. Girls are bobbing their hair and with their shorn locks are discarding the old downcast eyelids and ready blushes. I saw today a brilliant young woman, married by her parents against her will, who calmly wrote to her husband saying she no longer desired him. With which informal divorce she is going her way and making a remarkable record for herself in college. Of course the conservative folk are holding up their hands in righteous horror, and we hear a great deal of the sanctity of the home to be preserved at all costs.

"What if there never was any sanctity?" said the young woman grimly. "Someone has to be the vanguard of the courageous young against old and criminal social usages."

I dare say she is right. Anyway, right or wrong, I place my vote of confidence in the young of any race and age. Their frank eyes are apt to see more freshly and clearly than our old eyes, cautious and befogged with years.

Intoxicating, yes. So intoxicating that some of them are being swept off their feet into the mire beside the road. That is inevitable. The weak heads will have unsteady feet. But the strong ones will march on to force a better order, I believe, so that in the end even the weak will be stronger. To be sure, they do strange things, these boys and girls.

"Where is Miss Wang?" I asked my class yesterday, missing her keen young face.

"Oh, her fiancé is here, and she went to see him."

"What!" I cried aghast. "Why, no Western girl would do that. She should wait for him to come to her."

"When he has come so far already? Are not men and women equal?" was the simple answer. Old half-forgotten precepts of my young days rose to my lips, but on second thought I let them die. Who am I to superimpose my ideas of a mediæval Western chivalry upon these clear-headed young things? Let them work out their own salvation freely.

Meanwhile the vanguard marches on. Behind them is an invincible procession ending away back in the little primitive towns and villages, where the ancient customs seem to prevail untouched. Yet even there they know that they are part of the procession. And this is the beginning of progress.

Religion? Well, opinions might differ as to what has really been accomplished. We have been divided ourselves. So far the contribution of Christian missions has at least been as much educational as moral. It is a good thing, too, for if we have presented our religious dogmas with one hand we have given them science with the other, and being canny creatures they have applied the science to the dogmas. This, on the whole, is an encouraging fact. The Chinese is a fair-minded individual, and he has applied science remarkably impartially to all religions alike, with the result that the real stuff of which Christianity is made stands up well under the test—considerably better than any of the other old religions. Therefore we hear a great deal to-day of an indigenous Church in China and the Chinese applications of the principles of Christ. A good many of us are going to see some cherished dogmas and denominations cast aside, but some of us will see emerge the rare figure of a Man, liberated from the trappings we have put upon Him, which were not of His choosing.

Just now the weakest thing in China is the Government. Everything one hears of it is true. It is quite as bad as possible. It could not be more corrupt and helpless. What then? Well, I do not think the procession of youth will pass it by. Given time for them to grow a little more in depth, I believe these courageous young will fall upon it and demolish it. Bolshevism? No, I think not. The young Chinese rants a little and philosophizes a great deal, but he has an inner foundation of unemotional, hard common-sense, a practical gift from his ancestors, which will make him stop and see what Bolshevism has done thus far, and finding it barren of fruit he will cling to a saner, slower order of progress.

Time, time—that is the great essential of the Chinese. Expose him, figuratively speaking, to the best we have, let him take the best as he sees it, and then let us wait for development; wait, if need be, with patience to the third and fourth generation. They have always built slowly. Their great city walls are typical. Huge foundations, steady, immovable, laid with the unhurried hands of a hundred generations of men. So again with their ancient civilization.

It has been a thing of ages. It must be so again in its rebuilding. They are not a facile, quick people. They must see well and work slowly. But the result will be founded in the depths and it will be sure.

The carpenter next door but one to me came last year to make me a little dragon-carved table. He spent weeks over the pattern. Every detail must be perfectly clear before he could begin. He brought me half a dozen drawings. At last the table was fashioned and finally finished, and then polished exquisitely as only dull teak can polish. It will be a thing of beauty for my children's children. Now this does not mean that there will not be much cheap work done in many things—cheap politics, superficial education, shoddy commercialism. That is a phase of progress. For the last ten years the famous chinaware of Kiangsi has been degenerating into a distressing stuff made for quick sales for foreigners. Blurred patterns and careless workmanship made sad those of us who know the rare old rice-pattern bowls and teacups. But last summer I noticed some of the old lines creeping back. The temporary fever of the sudden new market was passing. The old craft was coming into its own again.

"This is an old design," I remarked to the proprietor in a china-shop.

"Yes," he said with a smile, "there is a beauty there which has been tried and found to be well beloved."

So I say the menace of Western civilization is superficial. I confess I do not like many things. I do not like, for instance, to see these young men and women students just back from abroad locked in the foolish embraces of modern dancing. It is unseemly and unfitting. I keep seeing behind them the graciousness and dignity of their ancestry. This hopping about is unworthy. We have better than that to give them. But I realize too that they must find it out for themselves and we shall have to endure for a space until they do so.

Least of all am I afraid of denationalization. They may adopt foreign things wholesale for a brief time. But the immutability of Chinese nature will be too much even for their own desires. They will unconsciously and inevitably begin to adapt—adapt customs and religion, morals, and politics—and in the end be quite as individually Chinese as ever. Indeed the West may be rather astounded some day to see certain things she had considered her own become so essentially Chinese that she will have to swallow hard and rub her eyes and think to remember their real origin.

Many times has China been conquered, so they say. It must be true, since history writes it so. But the conquerors and all their pomp are long since gone; enveloped, assimilated. And the vanquished have become the final victors through sheer persistence of inertia, and of time. It has been as much as a nation's life is worth to conquer the Chinese. Unresisting and resistless, they have slowly and peacefully dissipated the alien forces and in a hundred years have again become the conquerors.

It is this unreasoning, enduring individuality which the foreigner first dislikes and then perhaps unwillingly admires in the Chinese. He never

quite understands it. It is more than pride of race, although it has that element in it. It is an unconscious thing, a conviction which is part and parcel of their make-up that China is the real place and everything else is foreign and extraneous. But it is more than that. It is like the ocean—inexplicable, changeful, yet fundamentally unchangeable. Everything added to it does not increase it, and nothing can really be taken away from it. It is as natural and as unaccountable as an element of nature. Whatever it is, it is the quality which will keep China sane in a whirling world. It will keep her young people sober and her old from the hopelessness of the times. It provides for them a sublime self-confidence which nothing can destroy, a firm belief that all will eventually be well, in spite of present flood and famine and banditry.

"Are we not the people of the middle country of the world?" asked my old teacher the other day in a tone of tranquil surprise and as innocently as a child. And I, for one, was not prepared to say him either yea or nay.

A JUNGLE BEACH

William Beebe

A jungle moon first showed me my beach. For a week I had looked at it in blazing sunlight, walked across it, even sat on it in the intervals of getting wonted to the new laboratory; yet I had not perceived it. Colonel Roosevelt once said to me that he would rather perceive things from the point of view of a field-mouse, than be a human being and merely see them. And in my case it was when I could no longer see the beach that I began to discern its significance.

This British Guiana beach, just in front of my Kartabo bungalow, was remarkably diversified, and in a few steps, or strokes of a paddle, I could pass from clean sand to mangroves and muckamucka swamp, thence to out-jutting rocks, and on to the Edge of the World, all within a distance of a hundred yards. For a time my beach walks resulted in inarticulate reaction. After months in the blind-folded canyons of New York's streets, a hemicircle of horizon, a hemisphere of sky, and a vast expanse of open water lent itself neither to calm appraisal nor to impromptu cuff-notes.

It was recalled to my mind that the miracle of sunrise occurred every morning, and was not a rather belated alternation of illumination, following the quenching of Broadway's lights. And the moon I found was as dependable as when I timed my Himalayan expeditions by her shadowings. To these phenomena I soon became reaccustomed, and could watch a bird or outwit an insect in the face of a foreglow and silent burst of flame that shamed all the barrages ever laid down. But cosmic happenings kept drawing my attention and paralyzing my activities for long afterward. With a double rainbow and four storms in action at once; or

a wall of rain like sawn steel slowly drawing up one river while the Mazaruni remains in full sunlight; with Pegasus galloping toward the zenith at midnight and the Pleiades just clearing the Penal Settlement, I could not always keep on dissecting, or recording, or verifying the erroneousness of one of my recently formed theories.

There was Thuban, gazing steadily upon my little mahogany bungalow, as, six millenniums ago, he had shone unfalteringly down the little stone tube that led his rays into the Queen's Chamber, in the very heart of great Cheops. Just clearing a low palm was the present North Star, while, high above, Vega shone, patiently waiting to take her place half a million years hence. When beginning her nightly climb, Vega drew a thin, trembling thread of argent over the still water, just as in other years she had laid for me a slender silver strand of wire across frozen snow, and on one memorable night traced the ghost of a reflection over damp sand near the Nile—pale as the wraiths of the early Pharaohs.

Low on the eastern horizon, straight outward from my beach, was the beginning and end of the great zodiac band—the golden Hamal of Aries and the paired stars of Pisces; and behind, over the black jungle, glowed the Southern Cross. But night after night, as I watched on the beach, the sight which moved me most was the dull speck of emerald mist, a merest smudge on the slate of the heavens,—the spiral nebula in Andromeda,—a universe in the making, of a size unthinkable to human minds.

The power of my jungle beach to attract and hold attention was not only direct and sensory,—through sight and sound and scent,—but often indirect, seemingly by occult means. Time after time, on an impulse, I followed some casual line of thought and action, and found myself at last on or near the beach, on a lead that eventually would take me to the verge or into the water.

Once I did what for me was a most unusual thing. I woke in the middle of the night without apparent reason. The moonlight was pouring in a white flood through the bamboos, and the jungle was breathless and silent. Through my window I could see Jennie, our pet monkey, lying aloft, asleep on her little verandah, head cushioned on both hands, tail curled around her dangling chain, as a spider guards her webstrands for hint of disturbing vibrations. I knew that the slightest touch on that chain would awaken her, and indeed it seemed as if the very thought of it had been enough; for she opened her eyes, sent me the highest of insect-like notes and turned over, pushing her head within the shadow of her little house. I wondered if animals, too, were, like the Malays and so many savage tribes, afraid of the moonlight—the "luna-cy" danger in those strange color-strained rays, whose power must be greater than we realize. Beyond the monkey roosted Robert, the great macaw, wide-awake, watching me with all that broadside of intensive gaze of which only a parrot is capable.

The three of us seemed to be the only living things in the world, and

for a long time we—monkey, macaw, and man—listened. Then all but the man became uneasy. The monkey raised herself and listened, uncurled her tail, shifted, and listened. The macaw drew himself up, feathers close, forgot me, and listened. They, unlike me, were not merely listening—they were hearing something. Then there came, very slowly and deliberately, as if reluctant to break through the silent moonlight, a sound, low and constant, impossible to identify, but clearly audible even to my ears. For just an instant longer it held, sustained and quivering, then swiftly rose into a crashing roar—the sound of a great tree falling. I sat up and heard the whole long descent; but at the end, after the moment of silence, there was no deep boom—the sound of the mighty bole striking and rebounding from the earth itself. I wondered about this for a while; then the monkey and I went to sleep, leaving the macaw alone conscious in the moonlight, watching through the night with his great round, yellow orbs, and thinking the thoughts that macaws always think in the moonlight.

The next day the macaw and the monkey had forgotten all about the midnight sound, but I searched and found why there was no final boom. And my search ended at my beach. A bit of overhanging bank had given way and a tall tree had fallen headlong into the water, its roots sprawling helplessly in mid-air. Like rats deserting a sinking ship, a whole Noah's ark of tree-living creatures was hastening along a single cable shorewards: tree-crickets; ants laden with eggs and larvæ; mantids gesticulating as they walked, like old men who mumble to themselves; woodroaches, some green and leaf-like, others, facsimiles of trilobites—but fleet of foot and with one goal.

What was a catastrophe for a tree and a shift of home for the tenants was good fortune for me, and I walked easily out along the trunk and branches and examined the strange parasitic growths and the homes which were being so rapidly deserted. The tide came up and covered the lower half of the prostrate tree, drowning what creatures had not made their escape and quickening the air-plants with a false rain, which in course of time would rot their very hearts.

But the first few days were only the overture of changes in this shift of conditions. Tropic vegetation is so tenacious of life that it struggles and adapts itself with all the cunning of a Japanese wrestler. We cut saplings and thrust them into mud or the crevices of rocks at low tide far from shore, to mark our channel, and before long we have buoys of foliage banners waving from the bare poles above water. We erect a tall bamboo flagpole on the bank, and before long our flag is almost hidden by the sprouting leaves, and the pulley so blocked that we have occasionally to lower and lop it.

So the fallen tree, still gripping the nutritious bank with a moiety of roots, turned slowly in its fibrous stiffness and directed its life and sap and hopes upward. During the succeeding weeks I watched trunk and branches swell and bud out new

trunks, new branches, guided, controlled, by gravity, light, and warmth; and just beyond the reach of the tides, leaves sprouted, flowers opened and fruit ripened. Weeks after the last slow invertebrate plodder had made his escape shorewards, the taut liana strand was again crowded with a mass of passing life—a maze of vines and creepers, whose tendrils and suckers reached and curled and pressed onward, fighting for gangway to shore, through days and weeks, as the animal life which preceded them had made the most of seconds and minutes.

The half-circle of exposed raw bank became in its turn the center of a myriad activities. Great green kingfishers began at once to burrow; tiny emerald ones chose softer places up among the wreckage of wrenched roots; wasps came and chopped out bits for the walls and partitions of their cells; spiders hung their cobwebs between ratlines of rootlets; and hummingbirds promptly followed and plucked them from their silken nets, and then took the nets to bind their own tiny air-castles. Finally, other interests intervened, and like Jennie and Robert, I gradually forgot the tree that fell without an echo.

In the jungle no action or organism is separate, or quite apart, and this thing which came to the three of us suddenly at midnight led by devious means to another magic phase of the shore.

A little to the south along my beach is the Edge of the World. At least, it looks very much as I have always imagined that place must look, and I have never been beyond it; so that, after listening to many arguments in courts of law, and hearing the reasoning of bolsheviki, teetotalers, and pacifists, I feel that I am quite reasonable as human beings go. And best of all, it hurts no one, and annoys only a few of my scientific friends, who feel that one cannot indulge in such ideas at the wonderful hour of twilight, and yet at eight o'clock the following morning describe with impeccable accuracy the bronchial semi-rings, and the intricate mosaic of cartilage which characterizes and supports the *membranis tympaniformis* of *Atilla thamnophiloides;* a dogma which halves life and its interests.

The Edge of the World has always meant a place where usual things are different; and my southern stretch of beach was that, because of roots. Whenever in digging I have come across a root and seen its living flesh, perhaps pink or rose or pale green, so far underground, I have desired to know roots better; and now I found my opportunity. I walked along the proper trail, through right and usual trees, with reasonable foliage and normal trunks, and suddenly I stepped down over the Edge. Overhead and all around there was still the foliage. It shut out the sun except for greenish, moderated spots and beams. The branches dipped low in front over the water, shutting out the sky except along the tops of the cross-river jungle. Thus a great green-roofed chamber was formed; and here, between jungle and the water-level of the world, was the Kingdom of the Roots.

Great trees had in their youth fallen far forward, undermined by the

water, then slowly taken a new reach upward and stretched forth great feet and hands of roots, palms pressing against the mud, curved backs and thews of shoulders braced against one another and the drag of the tides. Little by little the old prostrate trunks were entirely obliterated by this fantastic network. There were no fine fibers or rootlets here; only great beams and buttresses, bridges and up-ended spirals, grown together or spreading wide apart. Root merged with trunk, and great boles became roots and then boles again in this unreasonable land. For here, in place of damp, black mold and soil, water alternated with dark-shadowed air; and so I was able for a time to live the life of a root, resting quietly among them, watching and feeling them, and moving very slowly, with no thought of time, as roots must.

I liked to wait until the last ripple had lapped against the sand beneath, and then slip quietly in from the margin of the jungle and perch—like a great tree-frog—on some convenient shelf. Seumas and Brigid would have enjoyed it, in spite of the fact that the Leprechauns seemed to have just gone. I found myself usually in a little room, walled with high-arched, thin sheets of living roots, some of which would form solid planks three feet wide and twelve long, and only an inch or two in thickness. These were always on edge, and might be smooth and sheer, or suddenly sprout five stubby, mittened fingers, or pairs of curved and galloping legs—and this thought gave substance to the simile which had occurred again and again; these trees reminded me of centaurs with proud, upright man torsos, and great curved backs. In one, a root dropped down and rested on the back, as a centaur who turns might rest his hand on his withers.

When I chanced upon an easy perch, and a stray idea came to mind, I squatted or sat or sprawled, and wrote, and strange things often happened to me. Once, while writing rapidly on a small sheet of paper, I found my lines growing closer and closer together until my fingers cramped, and the consciousness of the change overlaid the thoughts that were driving hand and pen. I then realized that, without thinking, I had been following a succession of faint lines, cross-ruled on my white paper, and looking up, I saw that a leaf-filtered opening had reflected strands of a spider-web just above my head, and I had been adapting my lines to the narrow spaces, my chirography controlled by cobweb shadows.

The first unreality of the roots was their rigidity. I stepped from one slender tendon of wood to the next, expecting a bending which never occurred. They might have been turned to stone, and even little twigs resting on the bark often proved to have grown fast. And this was the more unexpected because of the grace of curve and line, fold upon fold, with no sharp angles, but as full of charm of contour as their grays and olives were harmonious in color. Photographs showed a little of this; sketches revealed more; but the great splendid things themselves, devoid of similes and human imagination, were soul-satisfying in their simplicity.

I seldom sat in one spot more than a few minutes, but climbed and shifted, tried new seats, couches, perches, grips, sprawling out along the tops of two parallel monsters, or slipping under their bellies, always finding some easy way to swing up again. Two openings just permitted me to squeeze through, and I wondered whether, in another year, or ten, or fifty, the holes would have grown smaller. I became imbued with the quiet joy of these roots, so that I hated to touch the ground. Once I stepped down on the beach after something I had dropped, and the soft yielding of the sand was so unpleasant that I did not afterwards leave this strange mid-zone until I had to return. Unlike Antæus, I seemed to gain strength and poise by disassociation with the earth.

Here and there were pockets in the folds of the sweeping draperies, and each pocket was worth picking. When one tried to paint the roots, these pockets seemed made expressly to take the place of palette cups, except that now and then a crab resented the infusion of Hooker's green with his Vandyke brown puddle, and seized the end of the brush. The crabs were worthy tenants of such strange architecture, with comical eyes twiddling on the end of their stalks, and their white-mittened fists feinting and threatening as I looked into their little dark rain or tide-pools.

I found three pockets on one wall, which seemed as if they must have been "salted" for my benefit; and in them, as elsewhere on my beach, the two extremes of life met. The topmost one, curiously enough, contained a small crab, together with a large water-beetle at the farther end. Both seemed rather self-conscious, and there was no hint of fraternizing. The beetle seemed to be merely existing until darkness, when he could fly to more water and better company; and the crab appeared to be waiting for the beetle to go.

The next pocket was a long, narrow, horizontal fold, and I hoped to find real excitement among its aquatic folk; but to my surprise it had no bottom, but was a deep chute or socket, opening far below to the sand. However, this was not my discovery, and I saw dimly a weird little head looking up at me—a gecko lizard, which called this crevice home and the crabs neighbors. I hailed him as the only other backboned friend who shared the root-world with me, and then listened to a high, sweet tone, which came forth in swinging rhythm. It took some time for my eyes to become accustomed to the semi-darkness, and then I saw what the gecko saw—a big yellow-bodied fly humming in this cavern, and swinging in a small orbit as she sang. Now and then she dashed out past me and hovered in midair, when her note sank to a low, dull hum. Back again, and the sound rose and fell, and gained ten times in volume from the echo or reverberations. Each time she passed, the little lizard licked his chops and swallowed—a sort of vicarious expression of faith or desire; or was he in a Christian Science frame of mind, saying, "My, how good that fly

tasted!" each time the dipteron passed? The fly was just as inexplicable, braving danger and darkness time after time, to leave the sunshine, and vibrate in the dusk to the enormously magnified song of its wings.

With eyes that had forgotten the outside light, I leaned close to the opening and rested my forehead against the lichens of the wall of wood. The fly was frightened away, the gecko slipped lower, seemingly without effort, and in a hollowed side of the cavernous root I saw a mist, a quivering, so tenuous and indistinct that at first it might have been the dancing of motes. I saw that they were living creatures—the most delicate of tiny crane-flies—at rest looking like long-legged mosquitoes. Deep within this root, farther from the light than even the singing fly had ventured, these tiny beings whirled madly in mid-air—subterranean dervishes, using up energy for their own inexplicable ends, of which one very interested naturalist could make nothing.

Three weeks afterward I happened to pass at high tide in the canoe and peered into this pocket. The gecko was where geckos go in the space of three weeks, and the fly also had vanished, either within or without the gecko. But the crane-flies were still there: to my roughly appraising eyes the same flies, doing the same dance in exactly the same place. Three weeks later, and again I returned, this time intentionally, to see whether the dance still continued; and it was in full swing. That same night at midnight I climbed down, flashed a light upon them, and there they whirled and vibrated, silently, incredibly rapid, unceasingly.

After a thousand hours all the surroundings had changed. New leaves had sprouted, flowers faded and turned to fruit, the moon had twice attained her full brightness, our earth and sun and whole solar system had swept headlong a full two-score million miles on the endless swing toward Vega. Only the roots and the crane-flies remained. A thousand hours had apparently made no difference to them. The roots might have been the granite near by, fashioned by primeval earth-flame, and the flies but vibrating atoms within the granite, made visible by some alchemy of elements in this weird Rim of the World.

And so a new memory is mine; and when one of these insects comes to my lamp in whatever part of the world, fluttering weakly, legs breaking off at the slightest touch, I shall cease to worry about the scientific problems that loom too great for my brain, or about the imperfection of whatever I am doing, and shall welcome the crane-fly and strive to free him from this fatal passion for flame, directing him again into the night; for he may be looking for a dark pocket in a root, a pocket on the Edge of the World, where crane-flies may vibrate with their fellows in an eternal dance. And so, in some ordained way, he will fulfil his destiny and I acquire merit.

To write of sunrises and moonlight is to commit literary harikiri; but as that terminates life, so may I end this. And I choose the morning and the midnight of the sixth of August,

for reasons both greater and less than cosmic. Early that morning, looking out from the beach over the Mazacuni, as we called the union of the two great rivers, there was wind, yet no wind, as the sun prepared to lift above the horizon. The great soft-walled jungle was clear and distinct. Every reed at the landing had its unbroken counterpart in the still surface. But at the apex of the waters, the smoke of all the battles in the world had gathered, and upon this the sun slowly concentrated his powers, until he tore apart the cloak of mist, turning the dark surface, first to oxidized, and then to shining quicksilver. Instantaneously the same shaft of light touched the tips of the highest trees, and as if in response to a poised bâton, there broke forth that wonder of the world —the Zoroastrian chorus of tens of thousands of jungle creatures.

Over the quicksilver surface little individual breezes wandered here and there. I could clearly see the beginning and the end of them, and one that drifted ashore and passed me felt like the lightest touch of a breath. One saw only the ripple on the water; one thought of invisible wings and trailing unseen robes.

With the increasing warmth the water-mist rose slowly, like a last quiet breath of night; and as it ascended,—the edges changing from silvery gray to grayish white,—it gathered close its shredded margins, grew smaller as it rose higher, and finally became a cloud. I watched it and wondered about its fate. Before the day was past, it might darken in its might, hurl forth thunders and jagged light, and lose its very substance in down-poured liquid. Or, after drifting idly high in air, the still-born cloud might garb itself in rich purple and gold for the pageant of the west, and again descend to brood over the coming marvel of another sunrise.

The tallest of bamboos lean over our low, lazy spread of bungalow; and late this very night, in the full moonlight, I leave my cot and walk down to the beach over a shadow carpet of Japanese filigree. The air over the white sand is as quiet and feelingless to my skin as complete, comfortable clothing. On one side is the dark river; on the other, the darker jungle full of gentle rustlings, low, velvety breaths of sound; and I slip into the water and swim out, out, out. Then I turn over and float along with the almost tangible moonlight flooding down on face and water. Suddenly the whole air is broken by the chorus of big red baboons, which rolls and tumbles toward me in masses of sound along the surface and goes trembling, echoing on over shore and jungle, till hurled back by the answering chorus of another clan. It stirs one to the marrow, for there is far more in it than the mere roaring of monkeys; and I turn uneasily, and slowly surge back toward the sand, overhand now, making companionable splashes.

And then again I stop, treading water softly, with face alone between river and sky; for the monkeys have ceased, and very faint and low, but blended in wonderful minor harmony, comes another chorus— from three miles down the river: the

convicts singing hymns in their cells at midnight. And I ground gently and sit in the silvered shadows with little bewildered shrimps flicking against me, and unlanguaged thoughts come and go—impossible similes, too poignant phrases to be stopped and fettered with words, and I am neither scientist nor man nor naked organism, but just mind. With the coming of silence I look around and again consciously take in the scene. I am very glad to be alive, and to know that the possible dangers of jungle and water have not kept me armed and indoors. I feel, somehow, as if my very daring and gentle slipping-off of all signs of dominance and protection on entering into this realm had made friends of all the rare but possible serpents and scorpions, sting-rays and perai, vampires and electric eels. For a while I know the happiness of Mowgli.

And I think of people who would live more joyful lives in dense communities, who would be more tolerant, and more certain of straightforward friendship, if they could have as a background a fundamental hour of living such as this, a leaven for the rest of what, in comparison, seems mere existence.

At last I go back between the bamboos and their shadows, from unreal reality into a definiteness of cot and pajamas and electric torch. But wild nature still keeps touch with me; for as I write these lines, curled up on the edge of the cot, two vampires hawk back and forth so close that the wind from their wings dries my ink. And the soundness of my sleep is such that time does not exist between their last crepuscular squeak and the first wiry twittering of a blue tanager, in full sunshine, from a palm overhanging my beach.

THE LIBERATION OF A PEOPLE'S VITAL ENERGIES

Woodrow Wilson

No matter how often we think of it, the discovery of America must each time make a fresh appeal to our imaginations. For centuries, indeed from the beginning, the face of Europe had been turned toward the east. All the routes of trade, every impulse and energy, ran from west to east. The Atlantic lay at the world's back-door. Then, suddenly, the conquest of Constantinople by the Turk closed the route to the Orient. Europe had either to face about or lack any outlet for her energies; the unknown sea at the west at last was ventured upon, and the earth learned that it was twice as big as it had thought. Columbus did not find, as he had expected, the civilization of Cathay; he found an empty continent. In that part of the world, upon that new-found half of the globe, mankind, late in its history, was thus afforded an opportunity to set up a new civilization; here it was strangely privileged to make a new human experiment.

Never can that moment of unique opportunity fail to excite the emotion of all who consider its strangeness and

richness; a thousand fanciful histories of the earth might be contrived without the imagination daring to conceive such a romance as the hiding away of half the globe until the fulness of time had come for a new start in civilization. A mere sea captain's ambition to trace a new trade route gave way to a moral adventure for humanity. The race was to found a new order here on this delectable land, which no man approached without receiving, as the old voyagers relate, you remember, sweet airs out of woods aflame with flowers and murmurous with the sound of pellucid waters. The hemisphere lay waiting to be touched with life,—life from the old centres of living, surely, but cleansed of defilement, and cured of weariness, so as to be fit for the virgin purity of a new bride. The whole thing springs into the imagination like a wonderful vision, an exquisite marvel which once only in all history could be vouchsafed.

One other thing only compares with it; only one other thing touches the springs of emotion as does the picture of the ships of Columbus drawing near the bright shores,—and that is the thought of the choke in the throat of the immigrant of to-day as he gazes from the steerage deck at the land where he has been taught to believe he in his turn shall find an earthly paradise, where, a free man, he shall forget the heartaches of the old life, and enter into the fulfilment of the hope of the world. For has not every ship that has pointed her prow westward borne hither the hopes of generation after generation of the oppressed of other lands? How always have men's hearts beat as they saw the coast of America rise to their view! How it has always seemed to them that the dweller there would at last be rid of kings, of privileged classes, and of all those bonds which had kept men depressed and helpless, and would there realize the full fruition of his sense of honest manhood, would there be one of a great body of brothers, not seeking to defraud and deceive one another, but seeking to accomplish the general good!

What was in the writings of the men who founded America,—to serve the selfish interests of America? Do you find that in their writings? No; to serve the cause of humanity, to bring liberty to mankind. They set up their standards here in America in the tenet of hope, as a beacon of encouragement to all the nations of the world; and men came thronging to these shores with an expectancy that never existed before, with a confidence they never dared feel before, and found here for generations together a haven of peace, of opportunity, of equality.

God send that in the complicated state of modern affairs we may recover the standards and repeat the achievements of that heroic age!

For life is no longer the comparatively simple thing it was. Our relations one with another have been profoundly modified by the new agencies of rapid communication and transportation, tending swiftly to concentrate life, widen communities, fuse interests, and complicate all the processes of living. The individual is dizzily swept about in a thousand

new whirlpools of activities. Tyranny has become more subtle, and has learned to wear the guise of mere industry, and even of benevolence. Freedom has become a somewhat different matter. It cannot,—eternal principle that it is,—it cannot have altered, yet it shows itself in new aspects. Perhaps it is only revealing its deeper meaning.

What is liberty?

I have long had an image in my mind of what constitutes liberty. Suppose that I were building a great piece of powerful machinery, and suppose that I should so awkwardly and unskilfully assemble the parts of it that every time one part tried to move it would be interfered with by the others, and the whole thing would buckle up and be checked. Liberty for the several parts would consist in the best possible assembling and adjustment of them all, would it not? If you want the great piston of the engine to run with absolute freedom, give it absolutely perfect alignment and adjustment with the other parts of the machine, so that it is free, not because it is let alone or isolated, but because it has been associated most skilfully and carefully with the other parts of the great structure.

What is liberty? You say of the locomotive that it runs free. What do you mean? You mean that its parts are so assembled and adjusted that friction is reduced to a minimum, and that it has perfect adjustment. We say of a boat skimming the water with light foot, "How free she runs," when we mean, how perfectly she is adjusted to the force of the wind, how perfectly she obeys the great breath out of the heavens that fills her sails. Throw her head up into the wind and see how she will halt and stagger, how every sheet will shiver and her whole frame be shaken, how instantly she is "in irons," in the expressive phrase of the sea. She is free only when you have let her fall off again and have recovered once more her nice adjustment to the forces she must obey and cannot defy.

Human freedom consists in perfect adjustments of human interests and human activities and human energies.

Now, the adjustments necessary between individuals, between individuals and the complex institutions amidst which they live, and between those institutions and the government, are infinitely more intricate to-day than ever before. No doubt this is a tiresome and roundabout way of saying the thing, yet perhaps it is worth while to get somewhat clearly in our mind what makes all the trouble to-day. Life has become complex; there are many more elements, more parts, to it than ever before. And, therefore, it is harder to keep everything adjusted,—and harder to find out where the trouble lies when the machine gets out of order.

You know that one of the interesting things that Mr. Jefferson said in those early days of simplicity which marked the beginnings of our government was that the best government consisted in as little governing as possible. And there is still a sense in which that is true. It is still intolerable for the government to interfere with our individual activities

Photograph by Brown Brothers, New York

Woodrow Wilson

except where it is necessary to interfere with them in order to free them. But I feel confident that if Jefferson were living in our day he would see what we see: that the individual is caught in a great confused nexus of all sorts of complicated circumstances, and that to let him alone is to leave him helpless as against the obstacles with which he has to contend; and that, therefore, law in our day must come to the assistance of the individual. It must come to his assistance to see that he gets fair play; that is all, but that is much. Without the watchful interference, the resolute interference, of the government, there can be no fair play between individuals and such powerful institutions as the trusts. Freedom to-day is something more than being let alone. The program of a government of freedom must in these days be positive, not negative merely.

Well, then, in this new sense and meaning of it, are we preserving freedom in this land of ours, the hope of all the earth?

Have we, inheritors of this continent and of the ideals to which the fathers consecrated it,—have we maintained them, realizing them, as each generation must, anew? Are we, in the consciousness that the life of man is pledged to higher levels here than elsewhere, striving still to bear aloft the standards of liberty and hope, or, disillusioned and defeated, are we feeling the disgrace of having had a free field in which to do new things and of not having done them?

The answer must be, I am sure, that we have been in a fair way of failure,—tragic failure. And we stand in danger of utter failure yet except we fulfil speedily the determination we have reached, to deal with the new and subtle tyrannies according to their deserts. Don't deceive yourselves for a moment as to the power of the great interests which now dominate our development. They are so great that is is almost an open question whether the government of the United States can dominate them or not. Go one step further, make their organized power permanent, and it may be too late to turn back. The roads diverge at the point where we stand. They stretch their vistas out to regions where they are very far separated from one another; at the end of one is the old tiresome scene of government tied up with special interests; and at the other shines the liberating light of individual initiative, of individual liberty, of individual freedom, the light of untrammeled enterprise. I believe that that light shines out of the heavens itself that God has created. I believe in human liberty as I believe in the wine of life. There is no salvation for men in the pitiful condescensions of industrial masters. Guardians have no place in a land of freemen. Prosperity guaranteed by trustees has no prospect of endurance. Monopoly means the atrophy of enterprise. If monopoly persists, monopoly will always sit at the helm of the government. I do not expect to see monopoly restrain itself. If there are men in this country big enough to own the government of the United States, they are going to own it; what we have to determine now is whether we are big enough, whether we are men

enough, whether we are free enough, to take possession again of the government which is our own. We haven't had free access to it, our minds have not touched it by way of guidance, in half a generation, and now we are engaged in nothing less than the recovery of what was made with our own hands, and acts only by our delegated authority.

I tell you, when you discuss the question of the tariffs and of the trusts, you are discussing the very lives of yourselves and your children. I believe that I am preaching the very cause of some of the gentlemen whom I am opposing when I preach the cause of free industry in the United States, for I think they are slowly girding the tree that bears the inestimable fruits of our life, and that if they are permitted to gird it entirely nature will take her revenge and the tree will die.

I do not believe that America is securely great because she has great men in her now. America is great in proportion as she can make sure of having great men in the next generation. She is rich in her unborn children; rich, that is to say, if those unborn children see the sun in a day of opportunity, see the sun when they are free to exercise their energies as they will. If they open their eyes in a land where there is no special privilege, then we shall come into a new era of American greatness and American liberty; but if they open their eyes in a country where they must be employees or nothing, if they open their eyes in a land of merely regulated monopoly, where all the conditions of industry are determined by small groups of men, then they will see an America such as the founders of this Republic would have wept to think of. The only hope is in the release of the forces which philanthropic trust presidents want to monopolize. Only the emancipation, the freeing and heartening of the vital energies of all the people will redeem us. In all that I may have to do in public affairs in the United States I am going to think of towns such as I have seen in Indiana, towns of the old American pattern, that own and operate their own industries, hopefully and happily. My thought is going to be bent upon the multiplication of towns of that kind and the prevention of the concentration of industry in this country in such a fashion and upon such a scale that towns that own themselves will be impossible. You know what the vitality of America consists of. Its vitality does not lie in New York, nor in Chicago; it will not be sapped by anything that happens in St. Louis. The vitality of America lies in the brains, the energies, the enterprise of the people throughout the land; in the efficiency of their factories and in the richness of the fields that stretch beyond the borders of the town; in the wealth which they extract from nature and originate for themselves through the inventive genius characteristic of all free American communities.

That is the wealth of America, and if America discourages the locality, the community, the self-contained town, she will kill the nation. A nation is as rich as her free communi-

ties; she is not as rich as her capital city or her metropolis. The amount of money in Wall Street is no indication of the wealth of the American people. That indication can be found only in the fertility of the American mind and the productivity of American industry everywhere throughout the United States. If America were not rich and fertile, there would be no money in Wall Street. If Americans were not vital and able to take care of themselves, the great money exchanges would break down. The welfare, the very existence of the nation, rests at last upon the great mass of the people; its prosperity depends at last upon the spirit in which they go about their work in their several communities throughout the broad land. In proportion as her towns and her countrysides are happy and hopeful will America realize the high ambitions which have marked her in the eyes of all the world.

The welfare, the happiness, the energy and spirit of the men and women who do the daily work in our mines and factories, on our railroads, in our offices and ports of trade, on our farms and on the sea, is the underlying necessity of all prosperity. There can be nothing wholesome unless their life is wholesome; there can be no contentment unless they are contented. Their physical welfare affects the soundness of the whole nation. How would it suit the prosperity of the United States, how would it suit business, to have a people that went every day sadly or sullenly to their work? How would the future look to you if you felt that the aspiration had gone out of most men, the confidence of success, the hope that they might improve their condition? Do you not see that just so soon as the old self-confidence of America, just so soon as her old boasted advantage of individual liberty and opportunity, is taken away, all the energy of her people begins to subside, to slacken, to grow loose and pulpy, without fibre, and men simply cast about to see that the day does not end disastrously with them?

So we must put heart into the people by taking the heartlessness out of politics, business, and industry. We have got to make politics a thing in which an honest man can take his part with satisfaction because he knows that his opinion will count as much as the next man's, and that the boss and the interests have been dethroned. Business we have got to untrammel, abolishing tariff favors, and railroad discrimination, and credit denials, and all forms of unjust handicaps against the little man. Industry we have got to humanize,—not through the trusts,—but through the direct action of law guaranteeing protection against dangers and compensation for injuries, guaranteeing sanitary conditions, proper hours, the right to organize, and all the other things which the conscience of the country demands as the workingman's right. We have got to cheer and inspirit our people with the sure prospects of social justice and due reward, with the vision of the open gates of opportunity for all. We have got to set the energy and the initiative of this great people absolutely free, so that the future of America

will be greater than the past, so that the pride of America will grow with achievement, so that America will know as she advances from generation to generation that each brood of her sons is greater and more enlightened than that which preceded it, know that she is fulfilling the promise that she has made to mankind.

Such is the vision of some of us who now come to assist in its realization. For we Democrats would not have endured this long burden of exile if we had not seen a vision. We could have traded; we could have got into the game; we could have surrendered and made terms; we could have played the rôle of patrons to the men who wanted to dominate the interests of the country,—and here and there gentlemen who pretended to be of us did make those arrangements. They couldn't stand privation. You never can stand it unless you have within you some imperishable food upon which to sustain life and courage, the food of those visions of the spirit where a table is set before us laden with palatable fruits, the fruits of hope, the fruits of imagination, those invisible things of the spirit which are the only things upon which we can sustain ourselves through this weary world without fainting. We have carried in our minds, after you had thought you had obscured and blurred them, the ideals of those men who first set their foot upon America, those little bands who came to make a foothold in the wilderness, because the great teeming nations that they had left behind them had forgotten what human liberty was, liberty of thought, liberty of religion, liberty of residence, liberty of action.

Since their day the meaning of liberty has deepened. But it has not ceased to be a fundamental demand of the human spirit, a fundamental necessity for the life of the soul. And the day is at hand when it shall be realized on this consecrated soil,—a New Freedom,—a Liberty widened and deepened to match the broadened life of man in modern America, restoring to him in very truth the control of his government, throwing wide all gates of lawful enterprise, unfettering his energies, and warming the generous impulses of his heart,—a process of release, emancipation, and inspiration, full of a breath of life as sweet and wholesome as the airs that filled the sails of the caravels of Columbus and gave the promise and boast of magnificent Opportunity in which America *dare not fail.*

DRAMA

A NIGHT AT AN INN [1]

LORD DUNSANY

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

A. E. SCOTT-FORTESCUE (*the Toff*) *a dilapidated gentleman*
WILLIAM JONES (*Bill*)
ALBERT THOMAS
JACOB SMITH (*Sniggers*)
} *Merchant Sailors*

1ST PRIEST OF KLESH
2ND PRIEST OF KLESH
3RD PRIEST OF KLESH
KLESH

The Curtain rises on a room in an inn.

SNIGGERS *and* BILL *are talking.*

THE TOFF *is reading a paper.*

ALBERT *sits a little apart.*

Sniggers. What's his idea, I wonder?

Bill. I don't know.

Snig. And how much longer will he keep us here?

Bill. We've been here three days.

Snig. And 'aven't seen a soul.

Bill. And a pretty penny it cost us when he rented the 'pub.

Snig. 'Ow long did 'e rent the 'pub for?

Bill. You never know with him.

Snig. It's lonely enough.

Bill. 'Ow long did you rent the 'pub for, Toffy?

THE TOFF *continues to read a sporting paper; he takes no notice of what is said.*

Snig. 'E's such a toff.

Bill. Yet 'e's clever, no mistake.

Snig. Those clever ones are the beggars to make a muddle. Their plans are clever enough, but they don't work, and then they make a mess of things much worse than you or me.

Bill. Ah!

Snig. I don't like this place.

Bill. Why not?

Snig. I don't like the looks of it.

Bill. He's keeping us here because here those niggers can't find us. The three heathen priests what was looking for us so. But we want to go and sell our ruby soon.

Albert. There's no sense in it.

Bill. Why not, Albert?

Al. Because I gave those black devils the slip in Hull.

Bill. You give 'em the slip, Albert?

Al. The slip, all three of them. The fellows with the gold spots on their foreheads. I had the ruby then, and I give them the slip in Hull.

Bill. How did you do it, Albert?

Al. I had the ruby and they were following me . . .

Bill. Who told them you had the ruby? You didn't show it?

Al. No . . . But they kind of know.

Snig. They kind of know, Albert?

Al. Yes, they know if you've got it. Well, they sort of mouched after me, and I tells a policeman and he says, O they were only three poor niggers and they wouldn't hurt me. Ugh! When I thought of what they did in Malta to poor old Jim.

Bill. Yes, and to George in Bombay before we started.

Snig. Ugh!

Bill. Why didn't you give 'em in charge?

Al. What about the ruby, Bill?

Bill. Ah!

[1] From *Plays of Gods and Men* by Lord Dunsany. Copyright, G. P. Putnam's Sons. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

Al. Well, I did better than that. I walks up and down through Hull. I walks slow enough. And then I turns a corner and I runs. I never sees a corner but I turns it. But sometimes I let a corner pass just to fool them. I twists about like a hare. Then I sits down and waits. No priests.

Snig. What?

Al. No heathen black devils with gold spots on their face. I give 'em the slip.

Bill. Well done, Albert.

Snig. [*after a sigh of content*]. Why didn't you tell us?

Al. 'Cause 'e won't let you speak. 'E's got 'is plans and 'e thinks we're silly folk. Things must be done 'is way. And all the time I've give 'em the slip. Might 'ave 'ad one o' them crooked knives in him before now but for me who give 'em the slip in Hull.

Bill. Well done, Albert.

Snig. Do you hear that, Toffy? Albert has give 'em the slip.

The Toff. Yes, I hear.

Snig. Well, what do you say to that?

The Toff. O . . . Well done, Albert.

Al. And what a' you going to do?

The Toff. Going to wait.

Al. Don't seem to know what 'e's waiting for.

Snig. It's a nasty place.

Al. It's getting silly, Bill. Our money's gone and we want to sell the ruby. Let's get on to a town.

Bill. But 'e won't come.

Al. Then we'll leave him.

Snig. We'll be all right if we keep away from Hull.

Al. We'll go to London.

Bill. But 'e must 'ave 'is share.

Snig. All right. Only let's go. [*To* THE TOFF.] We're going, do you hear? Give us the ruby.

The Toff. Certainly.

He gives them a ruby from his waistcoat pocket: it is the size of a small hen's egg. He goes on reading his paper.

Al. Come on, Sniggers.

[*Exeunt* ALBERT *and* SNIGGERS

Bill. Good-bye, old man. We'll give you your fair share, but there's nothing to do here, no girls, no halls, and we must sell the ruby.

The Toff. I'm not a fool, Bill.

Bill. No, no, of course not. Of course you ain't, and you've helped us a lot. Good-bye. You'll say good-bye?

The Toff. Oh, yes, Good-bye. [*Still reads paper.*] [*Exit* BILL

THE TOFF *puts a revolver on the table beside him and goes on with his paper.*

Snig. [*out of breath*]. We've come back, Toffy.

The Toff. So you have.

Al. Toffy—how did they get here?

The Toff. They walked, of course.

Al. But it's eighty miles.

Snig. Did you know they were here, Toffy?

The Toff. Expected them about now.

Al. Eighty miles.

Bill. Toffy, old man—what are we to do?

The Toff. Ask Albert.

Bill. If they can do things like this there's no one can save us but you, Toffy—I always knew you were a clever one. We won't be fools any more. We'll obey you, Toffy.

The Toff. You're brave enough and strong enough. There isn't many that would steal a ruby eye out of an idol's head, and such an idol as that was to look at, and on such a night. You're brave enough, Bill. But you're all three of you fools. Jim would have none of my plans and where's Jim? And George. What did they do to him?

Snig. Don't, Toffy!

The Toff. Well, then, your strength is no use to you. You want cleverness; or they'll have you the way that they had George and Jim.

All. Ugh!

The Toff. Those black priests would follow you round the world in circles, year after year, till they got the idol's eye. And if we died with it they'd follow our grandchildren. That fool thinks he can escape men like that by running round three streets in the town of Hull.

Al. God's truth, *you* 'aven't escaped them, because they're *'ere.*

The Toff. So I supposed.

Al. You *supposed!*

The Toff. Yes, I believe there's no announcement in the Society papers. But I took this country seat especially to receive them. There's plenty of room if you dig; it is pleasantly situated and what is most important it is in a very quiet neighbourhood. So I am at home to them this afternoon.

Bill. Well, you're a deep one.

The Toff. And remember you've only my wits between you and death, and don't put your futile plans against those of an educated gentleman.

Al. If you're a gentleman, why don't you go about among gentlemen instead of the likes of us?

The Toff. Because I was too clever for them as I am too clever for you.

Al. Too clever for them?

The Toff. I never lost a game of cards in my life.

Bill. You never lost a game?

The Toff. Not when there was money on it.

Bill. Well, well.

The Toff. Have a game of poker?

All. No, thanks.

The Toff. Then do as you're told.

Bill. All right, Toffy.

Snig. I saw something just then. Hadn't we better draw the curtains?

The Toff. No.

Snig. What?

The Toff. Don't draw the curtains.

Snig. O all right.

Bill. But Toffy, they can see us. One doesn't let the enemy do that. I don't see why . . .

The Toff. No, of course you don't.

Bill. O all right, Toffy.

All begin to pull out revolvers.

The Toff [*putting his own away*]. No revolvers, please.

Al. Why not?

The Toff. Because I don't want any noise at my party. We might get guests that hadn't been invited. *Knives* are a different matter.

All draw knives. THE TOFF *signs to them not to draw them yet.* TOFFY *has already taken back his ruby.*

Bill. I think they're coming, Toffy.

The Toff. Not yet.

Al. When will they come?

The Toff. When I am quite ready to receive them. Not before.

Snig. I should like to get this over.

The Toff. Should you? Then we'll have them now.

Snig. Now?

The Toff. Yes. Listen to me. You shall do as you see me do. You will all pretend to go out. I'll show you how. I've got the ruby. When they see me alone they will come for their idol's eye.

Bill. How can they tell like this which of us has it?

The Toff. I confess I don't know, but they seem to.

Snig. What will you do when they come in?

The Toff. I shall do nothing.

Snig. What?

The Toff. They will creep up behind me. Then my friends, Sniggers and Bill and Albert, who gave them the slip, will do what they can.

Bill. All right, Toffy. Trust us.

The Toff. If you're a little slow you will see enacted the cheerful spectacle that accompanied the demise of Jim.

Snig. Don't, Toffy. We'll be there all right.

The Toff. Very well. Now watch me. [*He goes past the window to the inner door* R.*; he opens it inwards. Then under cover of the open door he slips down on his knee and closes it, remaining on the inside, appearing to have gone out. He signs to the others who understand. Then he appears to reënter in the same manner.*] Now, I shall sit with my back to the door. You go out one by one so far as our friends can make out. Crouch very low to be on the safe side. They mustn't see you through the window. [BILL *makes his sham exit.*] Remember, no revolvers. The police are, I believe, proverbially inquisitive.

The other two follow BILL. *All three are now crouching inside the door* R. THE TOFF *puts the ruby beside him on the table. He lights a cigarette.*

The door in back opens so slowly that you can hardly say at what moment it began. THE TOFF *picks up his paper.*

A Native of India wriggles along the floor ever so slowly, seeking cover from chairs. He moves L. *where* THE TOFF *is. The three sailors are* R. SNIGGERS *and* ALBERT *lean forward.* BILL'S *arm keeps them back. An armchair had better conceal them from the Indian. The black* PRIEST *nears* THE TOFF.

BILL *watches to see if any more are coming. Then he leaps forward alone (he has taken his boots off) and knifes the* PRIEST.

The PRIEST *tries to shout but* BILL'S *left hand is over his mouth.*

THE TOFF *continues to read his sporting paper. He never looks round.*

Bill [*sotto voce*]. There's only one, Toffy. What shall we do?

The Toff [*without turning his head*]. Only one?

Bill. Yes.

The Toff. Wait a moment. Let me think. [*Still apparently absorbed in his paper.*] Ah, yes. You go back, Bill. We must attract another guest. Now are you ready?

Bill. Yes.

The Toff. All right. You shall now see my demise at my Yorkshire residence. You must receive guests for me. [*He leaps up in full view of the window, flings up both arms and falls on to the floor near the dead* PRIEST.] Now be ready.

His eyes close.

There is a long pause. Again the door opens, very, very slowly. Another PRIEST *creeps in. He has three golden spots upon his forehead. He looks round, then he creeps up to his companion and turns him over and looks inside each of his clenched hands. Then he looks at the recumbent* TOFF. *Then he creeps towards him.*

BILL *slips after him and knifes him like the other with his left hand over his mouth.*

Bill [*sotto voce*]. We've only got two, Toffy.

The Toff. Still another.

Bill. What'll we do?

The Toff [*sitting up*]. Hum.

Bill. This is the best way, much.

The Toff. Out of the question. Never play the same game twice.

Bill. Why not, Toffy?

The Toff. Doesn't work if you do.

Bill. Well?

The Toff. I have it, Albert. You will now walk into the room. I showed you how to do it.

Al. Yes.

The Toff. Just run over here and have a fight at this window with these two men.

Al. But they're——

The Toff. Yes, they're dead, my perspicuous Albert. But Bill and I are going to resuscitate them—— Come on. [BILL *picks up a body under the arms.*] That's right, Bill. [*Does the same.*] Come and help us, Sniggers. [SNIGGERS *comes.*] Keep low, keep low. Wave their arms about, Sniggers. Don't show yourself. Now, Albert, over you go. Our Albert is slain. Back you get, Bill. Back, Sniggers. Still, Albert. Mustn't move when he comes. Not a muscle. [*A face appears at the window and stays for some time. Then the door opens and looking craftily round the third* PRIEST *enters. He looks at his companions' bodies and turns round. He suspects something. He takes up one of the knives and with a knife in each hand he puts his back to the wall. He looks to the left and right.*] Come on, Bill. [*The* PRIEST *rushes to the door.* THE TOFF *knifes the last* PRIEST *from behind.*] A good day's work, my friends.

Bill. Well done, Toffy. Oh, you are a deep one.

Al. A deep one if ever there was one.

Snig. There ain't any more, Bill, are there?

The Toff. No more in the world, my friend.

Bill. Aye, that's all there are. There were only three in the temple. Three priests and their beastly idol.

Al. What is it worth, Toffy? Is it worth a thousand pounds?

The Toff. It's worth all they've got in the shop. Worth just whatever we like to ask for it.

Al. Then we're millionaires, now.

The Toff. Yes, and what is more important, we no longer have any heirs.

Bill. We'll have to sell it now.

Al. That won't be easy. It's a pity it isn't small and we had half a dozen. Hadn't the idol any other on him?

Bill. No, he was green jade all over and only had this one eye. He had it in the middle of his forehead, and was a long sight uglier than anything else in the world.

Snig. I'm sure we ought all to be very grateful to Toffy.

Bill. And indeed we ought.

Al. If it hadn't 'ave been for him——

Bill. Yes, if it hadn't 'a' been for old Toffy . . .

Snig. He's a deep one.

The Toff. Well, you see, I just have a knack of foreseeing things.

Snig. I should think you did.

Bill. Why, I don't suppose anything happens that our Toff doesn't foresee. Does it, Toffy?

The Toff. Well, I don't think it does, Bill. I don't think it often does.

Bill. Life is no more than just a game of cards to our old Toff.

The Toff. Well, we've taken these fellows' trick.

Snig. [*going to the window*]. It wouldn't do for any one to see them.

The Toff. O nobody will come this way. We're all alone on a moor.

Bill. Where will we put them?

The Toff. Bury them in the cellar, but there's no hurry.

Bill. And what then, Toffy?

The Toff. Why, then we'll go to London and upset the ruby business. We have really come through this job very nicely.

Bill. I think the first thing that we ought to do is to give a little supper to old Toffy. We'll bury these fellows to-night.

Al. Yes, let's.

Snig. The very thing.

Bill. And we'll all drink his health.

Al. Good old Toffy.

Snig. He ought to have been a general or a premier.

They get bottles from cupboard, etc.

The Toff. Well, we've earned our bit of a supper.

They sit down.

Bill [*glass in hand*]. Here's to old Toffy who guessed everything.

Al. and *Snig.* Good old Toffy.

Bill. Toffy who saved our lives and made our fortunes.

Al. and *Snig.* Hear. Hear.

The Toff. And here's to Bill who saved me twice to-night.

Bill. Couldn't have done it but for your cleverness, Toffy.

Snig. Hear, hear. Hear, hear.

Al. He foresees everything.

Bill. A speech, Toffy. A speech from our general.

All. Yes, a speech.

Snig. A speech.

The Toff. Well, get me some water. This whiskey's too much for my head, and I must keep it clear till our friends are safe in the cellar.

Bill. Water. Yes, of course. Get him some water, Sniggers.

Snig. We don't use water here. Where shall I get it?

Bill. Outside in the garden.

[*Exit* SNIGGERS

Al. Here's to fortune.

Bill. Here's to Albert Thomas Esquire.

Al. And William Jones Esquire.

Reënter SNIGGERS *terrified*

The Toff. Hullo, here's Jacob Smith Esquire, J. P., alias Sniggers, back again.

Snig. Toffy, I've been a thinking about my share in that ruby. I don't want it, Toffy, I don't want it.

Courtesy of The Neighborhood Playhouse

The idol reclaims its own

Dunsany's *A Night at an Inn* as given at the Neighborhood Playhouse, New York

The Toff. Nonsense, Sniggers, nonsense.

Snig. You shall have it, Toffy, you shall have it yourself, only say Sniggers has no share in this 'ere ruby. Say it, Toffy, say it.

Bill. Want to turn informer, Sniggers?

Snig. No, no. Only I don't want the ruby, Toffy . . .

The Toff. No more nonsense, Sniggers; we're all in together in this. If one hangs we all hang; but they won't outwit me. Besides, it's not a hanging affair; they had their knives.

Snig. Toffy, Toffy, I always treated you fair, Toffy. I was always one to say, Give Toffy a chance. Take back my share, Toffy.

The Toff. What's the matter? What are you driving at?

Snig. Take it back, Toffy.

The Toff. Answer me; what are you up to?

Snig. I don't want my share any more.

Bill. Have you seen the police?

ALBERT *pulls out his knife.*

The Toff. No, no knives, Albert.

Al. What then?

The Toff. The honest truth in open court, barring the ruby. We were attacked.

Snig. There's no police.

The Toff. Well, then, what's the matter?

Bill. Out with it.

Snig. I swear to God . . .

Al. Well?

The Toff. Don't interrupt.

Snig. I swear I saw something *what I didn't like.*

The Toff. What you didn't like?

Snig. [*in tears*]. O Toffy, Toffy, take it back. Take my share. Say you take it.

The Toff. What has he seen?

Dead silence only broken by SNIGGERS' *sobs. Then stony steps are heard.*

Enter a hideous Idol. *It is blind and gropes its way. It gropes its way to the ruby and picks it up and screws it into a socket in the forehead.*

SNIGGERS *still weeps softly; the rest stare in horror.* The Idol *steps out, not groping. Its steps move off then stop.*

The Toff. O great heavens!

Al. [*in a childish, plaintive voice*]. What is it, Toffy?

Bill. Albert, it is that obscene idol [*in a whisper*] come from India.

Al. It is gone.

Bill. It has taken its eye.

Snig. We are saved.

Off, a voice [*with outlandish accent*]. Meestaire William Jones, Able Seaman.

THE TOFF *has never spoken, never moved. He only gazes stupidly in horror.*

Bill. Albert, Albert, what is this?

He rises and walks out. One moan is heard. SNIGGERS *goes to window. He falls back sickly.*

Al. [*in a whisper*]. What has happened?

Snig. I have seen it. I have seen it. O I have seen it.

He returns to table.

The Toff [*laying his hand very gently on Sniggers' arm, speaking softly and winningly*]. What was it, Sniggers?

Snig. I have seen it.

Al. What?

Snig. O!

Voice. Meestaire Albert Thomas, Able Seaman.

Al. Must I go, Toffy? Toffy, must I go?

Snig. [*clutching him*]. Don't move.

Al. [*going*]. Toffy, Toffy.

[*Exit*

Voice. Meestaire Jacob Smith, Able Seaman.

Snig. I can't go, Toffy. I can't go. I can't do it.

[*He goes*

Voice. Meestaire Arnold Everett Scott-Fortescue, late Esquire, Able Seaman.

The Toff. I did not foresee it.

[*Exit*

CURTAIN.

THE LORD'S PRAYER[1]

FRANÇOIS COPPÉE

A NEW TRANSLATION BY MARY ALDIS

CHARACTERS

MADEMOISELLE ROSE
ZÉLEE, *her housekeeper*
MÈRE BLANCHE, *a neighbor*
THE CURÉ
JACQUES LE ROUX
AN OFFICER
SOLDIERS

Time of the French Commune

SCENE: *A room on the ground floor with a door and two windows, looking out over a small sunlit garden full of rosebushes in flower.*

Through the open gate and beyond the garden, which is enclosed by a low wall, is seen a suburban lane; and in the distance, high factory chimneys.

The furniture of the room is simple; a plain sideboard, a round table, some chairs, a wicker armchair. At left, a fireplace. On the mantel, a colored plaster statue of the Virgin. At right, a roll-top desk, and a mahogany bookcase filled with books. On the walls, a large ivory crucifix and two religious pictures. Doors at right and left.

When the curtain rises, ZÉLEE, *an old woman in peasant's dress and cap, is seated in an alert attitude. Standing near her is* MÈRE BLANCHE, *a woman of the Paris Environs. She is hatless and carries a basket of provisions on her arm.*

Mère Blanche. You are sure? He is really killed? [ZÉLEE *nods.*] There must be some mistake. It's too terrible!

Zélee. There can't be any. Listen! It was near here—in Rue Haxe—yesterday afternoon. The rebels were carrying everything before them. The Abbé was against the wall with the others—he was speaking—he raised his hand to *bless* them—and then—then—he fell—shot dead. When they took him as a hostage four days ago, Mademoiselle Rose had no fear. "We shall have him back again soon," she said. He was so good, so beloved! Oh, the brutes, to shoot him down!

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Sound as of volley of shots is heard in the distance.

Mère B. What is that?

Zél. [*starting up*]. The soldiers from Versailles! That is right. Kill the rebels! Butcher them! It will serve them right!

Mère B. Hush! You don't know what you're saying! Last night the brook ran red with blood. More than one innocent man was killed.

Zél. And who more innocent than my poor master—so strong, so tender, a true father to his people—keeping nothing for himself, giving away all that he had!—To kill him! —When your passions are aroused, you Parisians are like wild beasts! It's "For the Commune," is it? It's the lust to kill!

Mère B. Where is Mademoiselle Rose? She worshipped her brother.

Zél. At first she did not say a word. I was frightened. I thought she was going mad, and then—she cried out against Paris. "The horror, the horror!" At last, she dropped off to sleep in his armchair. [*Points towards right.*] Just now in her sleep, I heard her grind her teeth.

Mère B. Poor girl!

Zél. I came to them fifteen years ago. The Abbé was a boy of ten and Mademoiselle Rose only eighteen—so pretty, so young, so tender of little Jean! Their father and mother were dead—they were alone—the two young things. He was always reading. She was so proud when he brought home prizes from school. Then he went away to the seminary. We were so lonely! A rich farmer wanted to marry her, but she said she must take care of little Jean. "When he is a priest," she said, "I will keep his house." And she kept her word. And now he is dead and she is alone! [ZÉLEE *bursts into sobs.*]

The voice of MADEMOISELLE ROSE *comes from the room beyond.*

Mademoiselle Rose. Zélee!

Zél. She is awake. You had better go. She must not talk.

Mère B. Of course. Good-night. God keep you.

[*Exit* MÈRE BLANCHE *at back. After a moment enter* MADEMOISELLE ROSE *from right, unsteadily.* ZÉLEE *goes to her tenderly and supports her to a chair.*

Zél. You are better? Have you slept?

Mlle. Rose. Yes—but the dreams! The row of prisoners against the wall, the crack of the guns—they fall quickly, one after another. I can't blot it out. [ZÉLEE *brings water which she drinks eagerly.*] I heard the guns in my sleep. Are they fighting still?

Zél. No, they say the last rebels were captured at Père la Chaise.

Mlle. Rose [*pointing to the garden*]. See how the roses drop their petals. Look at the sunshine on the grass; the birds are singing. And my brother, my brother is dead! [*She rocks herself to and fro.*] How did you know the rebels were taken?

Zél. Mère Blanche told me. She has just gone.

Mlle. Rose. The woman who lives at the end of the street? My brother was good to her.

Zél. Monsieur the Curé has been here. I said you were asleep. He promised to return.

Mlle. Rose. I can't see him.

Zél. Mademoiselle! Think again. He loved Abbé Jean. They were friends. It is his right to come.

Mlle. Rose. Oh, well, let him come; but if he dares try to comfort me, if he talks about resignation, I can't bear it. I won't be told about the justice and goodness of God! I won't! Zélee, I shall live for a long, long time. I am very strong. The days and the weeks and the years will follow each other. The little clock there will keep on ticking them off, one after another, over and over and over, until I am an old woman. And always I'll be here. Animals that are no longer of use they kill. What am I to do now? They have taken away from me my child, my little brother. I am no longer of use. What can be done with me? If I could avenge his death, bring his murderers to justice! But I am helpless! And God lets such things be! I tell you, if God exists, He is false or He is powerless. He lets an innocent man die so! I was a fool to believe in Him, in His goodness, His mercy. Let them not talk to me of Heaven—there is no God!

While she has been speaking THE CURÉ, *an old white-haired priest, has come in. He stops at the threshold of the open door, not hearing Mademoiselle Rose's last words. She turns quickly.*

Zél. It is the Curé. [ZÉLEE *goes out.* THE CURÉ *comes towards* MADEMOISELLE ROSE.

The Curé. My poor child, my poor, poor child!

Mlle. Rose. Thank you for coming, Monsieur le Curé; but can we not talk—a little later? You loved him, I know. I do not wish to be unkind—only I can't speak of it. I can't! Leave me alone, I beg of you.

The Curé. If I am unwelcome, I will go, but—a holy priest of God has submitted to martyrdom. I wish to say to you one word. Be comforted—your brother is with the saints of God. He is in Heaven.

Mlle. Rose. Ah, I was waiting for that! You say my brother is in Heaven! I say he is in the Rue Haxe, bloody, horrible, pierced with gunshots—that I can see. I cannot see him in Heaven with a palm in his hand among your saints! I tell you those ghouls who killed him, who threw his body into a pit and covered him with clay and stones destroyed my faith in Heaven. Do you understand now? I suppose you think it is shining, your Heaven, calm and blue and serene, while Paris is burning, while the pavements are red and slippery with blood. Sodom and Gomorrah are come again. But he was good, my brother. What has he done that he should be part of that? Your Heaven, I don't believe in it! I defy God! I have said it. Curse me if you will.

The Curé. My child, I weep for you. What you say does not frighten me. God will forgive you when you ask His forgiveness—as you will ask it; but in the holiness with which he has been invested, in his glory among the angels, your brother's heart is rent by the blasphemies of his unhappy sister.

Mlle. Rose. Oh, forgive me! I am beside myself. But if he is in Paradise, as you say, how can I live

on here? When he was little, I cared for him; when he became a priest, noble and strong, I looked up to him as to a father. I served him—I took care of him—he took no thought for himself. Every evening he would read—here—by this lamp—and I would sew near him. Often we would both speak at the same moment of the same thing, so close were our thoughts. For his sake I refused to marry. When he was absent I stitched my thoughts of him into the garments I made for him; and I was happy. I owe him everything, and now! My grief is precious to me,—a cruel joy. My last breath will be to mourn for him—my brother.

The Curé. Poor, broken heart! Your tears will water a green spot in the desert of your empty future. My child, guard your suffering in your heart, but keep always in your mind the knowledge that he knows all you think, all you do. I speak now not as the Curé, but as an old man who has seen life and loves you. I feel the spirit of your brother hovering near us. It is as if he said: "Weep if you must, my sister, your tears are dear to me; but weep with courage. Hold ever in your heart the memory of former days, and the hope of those to come. Live nobly. I will watch over you. Read aloud the Holy Book, and as you hear the divine words you will think that you hear the echo of my voice. When you succor those unfortunate ones whom I have loved, you will feel the pressure of my hand in their handclasp. Travel then, the length of the way marked out for you. I, your invisible guide, will help you bear your burden of sorrow. Be not troubled that the hour is afar off when the blessed dawn of your immortal day shall break in holy light upon your vision. Be patient to the end."

Mlle. Rose. Oh, Monsieur le Curé, if it were true! But it is not true! Oh, why cannot I die too?

Firing is heard again in the distance.

The Curé. They are still fighting.

Mlle. Rose. What's that? Oh, yes, I remember, the Commune is beaten. The rebels are killed. [*With a hoarse triumphant cry.*] My brother is avenged!

The Curé. Who knows who is killed? There may be many who are innocent.

Mlle. Rose. How can you pity them? They are murderers! [*More shots are heard.*] Do you hear that? The sound of the guns makes me glad. I am mad for vengeance! If they need any one to excite the soldiers, to shoot down the rebels, let them come to me, I am ready!

The Curé. And it is his sister who says this!

Mlle. Rose. Can't you understand? My brother—my brother was killed! Do you hear? Shot down after all the years of patient, devoted self-sacrifice! The moment their passions are aroused, they shoot him down. Have they souls? Look! [*She opens a cupboard and takes out a black cassock and a priest's round hat.*] See how worn and shabby these are. I hid them so that he might get new ones. But when I told him, he looked at me with his tender smile. "Rose," he said, "I have just been to see the Duvals. There are five mouths to feed now, and another coming. Sister Rose,

please give me back my old clothes. You will mend them?" And four days later he was in prison as a hostage, and there was no one to pay his ransom! And you stand there and bid me remember to "pardon"! You try to rock my bitterness to sleep with your pity—but the sound of those muskets firing upon traitors calls to me. I glory in their punishment!

The Curé [*sternly*]. If I thought but of the dignity due the office I hold, I should pass the threshold of that door and never return. I should pronounce denunciation upon a rebellious soul and go away. But the God whom you defy is the same God your brother worshiped. I dare to affirm that at the moment of his death your brother raised his hand in blessing and in supplication for pardon: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." Hate, curse, denounce, if you must, unhappy woman that you are. But remember that if your brother could speak to those who caused his death, it would be in pity for their blindness and in forgiveness for their cruelty. [*Goes towards the door.*] Good-bye.

Mlle. Rose. My brother was a saint, and I am but a woman. What is to become of me? What shall I do?

The Curé. Pray.

[*Exit slowly, leaving the door open*

Mlle. Rose [*alone*]. He said to pray. My heart is full of hatred. I can never pray again. [*She takes her rosary and after a moment begins haltingly:*] Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy—thy—will—be done—Oh, I can't!—Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses—[*pause*] as we forgive those who trespass against us—forgive! forgive whom? Those murderers? No! I will *never* forgive them—by the beads of this rosary—[*She gazes at the rosary, then throws it upon the table.*] He said my brother forgave them. I will never, never forgive them!

At this moment a bareheaded, disheveled man wearing the uniform of a Communist enters quickly at the back by the gate into the garden. Before closing the gate, he looks quickly in either direction, then rapidly crosses the little garden and comes into the room, shutting the door behind him.

Jacques Le Roux. At last, shelter!

MADEMOISELLE ROSE *gives a cry of anger and surprise.*

Jac. For the love of God, let me stay!

Mlle. Rose. A rebel, in my house!

Jac. I am a fugitive. They are tracking me to my death as they track a hunted animal. If they take me they will shoot me against the wall. I saw your garden gate. You will hide me? Give me a corner where I can lie hid for one day, only one. I promise to go to-morrow. Turn me out now, and I am lost. You love some man—father, son, husband, brother! I implore you, save my life in the name of the man you love!

Mlle. Rose [*slowly*]. You ask that I save you "in the name of the man I love." Know, then, I had a brother whom I loved. He was shot yesterday, against a wall—the Abbé Morel!

Jac. I am lost. Let me go!

Mlle. Rose. You have said it. Lost! Yes, go forth and I will go too. I will follow you to the street and I will cry to the crowd, "There is the assassin!"

Jac. I am no assassin. I fought as others fought. I am innocent of crime. Have mercy!

Mlle. Rose. You are all murderers. How dare you ask for mercy? [*She takes up the cassock.*] Look at this coat my brother wore because he gave away all his money to you—you, his murderers! And you pray to me for mercy!

Jac. I see I cannot touch you. You are too cruel. Since you rejoice that I am to die, I will tell you who I am. Jacques Le Roux, member of the Commune.

Mlle. Rose. You!

Jac. I voted against the Revolution. I opposed the shooting of hostages. Still, I have fought against the Government. I am not a believer, yet I reverence and trust those who worship God. Now I find what the goodness of a Christian woman means. You have no pity, you have no heart. How dare you pretend to worship the memory of Christ, you who will not forgive a man who is innocent—you, who will deliver up to his death a hunted fugitive who begs you for an asylum!

Zél. [*Enters quickly*]. Mademoiselle Rose! Mademoiselle Rose! Soldiers are here to search the house.

She sees JACQUES *and stifles a cry of surprise.*

Mlle. Rose. Tell them I will come. Go. [*Exit* ZÉLEE.]—He said my brother forgave all!

Jac. [*looking at her*]. There is nothing for it, then, but death. Well, if it's my fate—

She takes the cassock and hat from the chair and holds them out to JACQUES. *With the other hand she opens a door at the right, motioning him to a room within.*

Mlle. Rose. Go in there. Put them on. [*A sound of loud knocking is heard at the gate.*] Go quickly! [*She makes an imperious gesture, and* JACQUES *takes the garments from her and obeys.* MADEMOISELLE ROSE *closes the door and stands by it.*] Have I done as you would wish, my brother? Oh, my beloved, my beloved! Give me some sign that I have done your will!

An OFFICER, *followed by several soldiers, enters*

Officer. Madam, your pardon! One of the rebels is concealed somewhere in this street—a leader—we must find him. Will you answer my questions or shall we search the house? It will go hard with you if he is found here.

Mlle. Rose. Certainly I will answer your questions. There is no one here. Look if you choose. [*The* OFFICER *glances about, sees the image of the Virgin, and the pictures, and steps back embarrassed.*] Do you wish proofs? Indeed, I have no sympathy with rebels. [*At this moment* JACQUES LE ROUX *in cassock and hat appears at the door on the right, stopping as if in amazement as he perceives the soldiers.*] I live here alone with my brother—ah, here he is.

OFFICER *respectfully touches his cap to the supposed priest.*

Officer. Pardon, Monsieur Abbé! Monsieur—Madam. [*To his soldiers.*] March!

[*Exit, back, followed by soldiers*

Jac. [*extending his hand to* MADEMOISELLE ROSE]. My children! My wife!

Mlle. Rose [*holding up her hand to silence him*]. It was for him, my brother. You wear his cassock. You are safe. Go. [*She points towards the door.* JACQUES LE ROUX, *uncovering his head, goes slowly out.* MADEMOISELLE ROSE, *when alone, takes up the rosary from the table, pressing it to her lips, then falls upon her knees.*] Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

CURTAIN.

THE MAKER OF DREAMS[1]

A FANTASY IN ONE ACT

OLIPHANT DOWN

EVENING. *A room in an old cottage, with walls of dark oak, lit only by the moonlight that peers through the long, low casement-window at the back, and the glow from the fire that is burning merrily on the spectator's left. A cobbled street can be seen outside, and a door to the right of the window opens directly on to it. Opposite the fire is a kitchen dresser with cups and plates twinkling in the firelight. A high-backed oak settle, as though afraid of the cold moonlight, has turned its back on the window and warms its old timbers at the fire. In the middle of the room stands a table with a red cover; there are chairs on either side of it. On the hob, a kettle is keeping itself warm; whilst overhead, on the hood of the chimney-piece, a small lamp is turned very low.*

A figure flits past the window and, with a click of the latch, PIERRETTE *enters. She hangs up her cloak by the door, gives a little shiver and runs to warm herself for a moment. Then, having turned up the lamp, she places the kettle on the fire. Crossing the room, she takes a table-cloth from the dresser and proceeds to lay tea, setting out crockery for two. Once she goes to the window and, drawing aside the common red casement-curtains, looks out, but returns to her work, disappointed. She puts a spoonful of tea into the teapot, and another, and a third. Something outside attracts her attention; she listens, her face brightening. A voice is heard singing:*

Baby, don't wait for the moon,
She is caught in a tangle of boughs;
And mellow and musical June
Is saying "Good-night" to the cows.

The voice draws nearer and a conical white hat goes past the window. PIERROT *enters*

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The music for "The Maker of Dreams" is obtainable from Messrs. French at 5s. net in London and 1 dollar 50 cents in New York. Band parts can be hired by arrangement.

Pierrot [*throwing his hat to* PIERRETTE.] Ugh! How cold it is. My feet are like ice.

Pierrette. Here are your slippers. I put them down to warm.

She kneels beside him, as he sits before the fire and commences to slip off his shoes.

Pierrot [*singing*].

Baby, don't wait for the moon,
She will put out her tongue and grimace;
And mellow and musical June
Is pinning the stars in their place.

Isn't tea ready yet?

Pierrette. Nearly. Only waiting for the kettle to boil.

Pierrot. How cold it was in the market-place today! I don't believe I sang at all well. I can't sing in the cold.

Pierrette. Ah, you're like the kettle. He can't sing when he's cold either. Hurry up, Mr. Kettle, if you please.

Pierrot. I wish it were in love with the sound of its own voice.

Pierrette. I believe it is. Now it's singing like a bird. We'll make the tea with the nightingale's tongue. [*She pours the boiling water into the teapot.*] Come along.

Pierrot [*looking into the fire*]. I wonder. She had beauty, she had form, but had she soul?

Pierrette [*cutting bread and butter at the table*]. Come and be cheerful, instead of grumbling there to the fire.

Pierrot. I was thinking.

Pierrette. Come and have tea. When you sit by the fire, thoughts only fly up the chimney.

Pierrot. The whole world's a chimney-piece. Give people a thing as worthless as paper, and it catches fire in them and makes a stir; but real thought, they let it go up with the smoke.

Pierrette. Cheer up, Pierrot. See how thick I've spread the butter.

Pierrot. You're always cheerful.

Pierrette. I try to be happy.

Pierrot. Ugh!

He has moved to the table. There is a short silence, during which PIERROT *sips his tea moodily.*

Pierrette. Tea all right?

Pierrot. Middling.

Pierrette. Only middling! I'll pour you out some fresh.

Pierrot. Oh, it's all right! How you do worry a fellow!

Pierrette. Heigh-ho! Shall I chain up that big black dog?

Pierrot. I say, did you see that girl to-day?

Pierrette. Whereabouts?

Pierrot. Standing by the horse-trough. With a fine air, and a string of great beads.

Pierrette. I didn't see her.

Pierrot. I did, though. And she saw me. Watched me all the time I was singing, and clapped her hands like anything each time. I wonder if it is possible for a woman to have a soul as well as such beautiful colouring.

Pierrette. She was made up!

Pierrot. I'm sure she was not! And how do you know? You didn't see her.

Pierrette. Perhaps I *did* see her.

Pierrot. Now, look here, Pierrette, it's no good your being jealous. When you and I took on this show business, we arranged to be just partners and nothing more. If I see any one I want to marry, I shall marry 'em. And if you see any one

who wants to marry you, *you* can marry 'em.

Pierrette. I'm not jealous! It's absurd!

Pierrot [*singing abstractedly*].

Baby, don't wait for the moon,
She has scratched her white chin on the gorse;
And mellow and musical June
Is bringing the cuckoo remorse.

Pierrette. Did you see that girl after the show?

Pierrot. No. She had slipped away in the crowd. Here, I've had enough tea. I shall go out and try to find her.

Pierrette. Why don't you stay in by the fire? You could help me to darn the socks.

Pierrot. Don't try to chaff me. Darning, indeed! I hope life has got something better in it than darning.

Pierrette. I doubt it. It's pretty much the same all the world over. First we wear holes in our socks, and then we mend them. The wise ones are those who make the best of it, and darn as well as they can.

Pierrot. I say, that gives me an idea for a song.

Pierrette. Out with it, then.

Pierrot. Well, I haven't exactly formed it yet. This is what flashed through my mind as you spoke: [*He runs up on to the table, using it as a stage.*]

Life's a ball of worsted,
Unwind it if you can,
You who oft have boasted

[*He pauses for a moment, then hurriedly, in order to gloss over the false accenting.*]

That you are a man.

Of course that's only a rough idea.

Pierrette. Are you going to sing it at the show?

Pierrot [*jumping down from the table*]. You're always so lukewarm. A man of artistic ideas is as sensitively skinned as a baby.

Pierrette. Do stay in, Pierrot. It's so cold outside.

Pierrot. You want me to listen to you grumbling, I suppose.

Pierrette. Just now you said I was always cheerful.

Pierrot. There you are; girding at me again.

Pierrette. I'm sorry, Pierrot. But the market-place is dreadfully wet, and your shoes are awfully thin.

Pierrot. I tell you I will not stop in. I'm going out to find that girl. How do I know she isn't the very woman of my dreams?

Pierrette. Why are you always trying to picture an ideal woman?

Pierrot. Don't *you ever* picture an ideal man?

Pierrette. No, I try to be practical.

Pierrot. Women are so unimaginative! They are such pathetic, motherly things, and when they feel extra motherly they say, "I'm in love." All that is so sordid and petty. I want a woman I can set on a pedestal, and just look up at her and love her.

Pierrette [*speaking very fervently*].

Pierrot, don't wait for the moon,
There's a heart chilling cold in her rays;
And mellow and musical June
Will only last thirty short days.

Pierrot. Oh, I should never make you understand! Well, I'm off.

As he goes out, he sings, sidelong, over his shoulder in a mocking tone,
"Baby, don't wait for the moon."

PIERRETTE *listens for a moment*

to his voice dying away in the distance. Then she moves to the fire-place, and begins to stir the fire. As she kneels there, the words of an old recitation form on her lips. Half unconsciously she recites it again to an audience of laughing flames and glowing, thoughtful coals

Pierrette.

There lives a maid in the big, wide world,
By the crowded town and mart,
And people sigh as they pass her by;
They call her Hungry Heart.

For there trembles that on her red rose lip
That never her tongue can say,
And her eyes are sad, and she is not glad
In the beautiful calm of day.

Deep down in the waters of pure, clear thought,
The mate of her fancy lies;
Sleeping, the night is made fair by his light
Sweet kiss on her dreaming eyes.

Though a man was made in the wells of time
Who could set her soul on fire,
Her life unwinds, and she never finds
This love of her heart's desire.

If you meet this maid of a hopeless love,
Play not a meddler's part.
Silence were best; let her keep in her breast
The dream of her hungry heart.

Overcome by tears, she hides her face in her hands. A slow, treble knock comes on the door; PIERRETTE *looks up wonderingly. Again the knock sounds.*

Pierrette. Come in.

The door swings slowly open, as though of its own accord, and without, on the threshold, is seen THE MANUFACTURER, *standing full in the moonlight. He is a curious, though kindly-looking, old man, and yet, with all his years, he does not appear to be the least infirm. He is the sort of person that children take to instinctively. He wears a quaintly cut, bottle-green coat, with silver buttons and large side-pockets, which almost hide his knee-breeches. His shoes have large buckles and red heels. He is exceedingly unlike a prosperous manufacturer, and, but for the absence of a violin, would be mistaken for a village fiddler. Without a word he advances into the room, and, again of its own accord, the door closes noiselessly behind him*

Pierrette [*jumping up and moving towards him*]. Oh, I'm so sorry. I ought to have opened the door when you knocked.

Manufacturer. That's all right. I'm used to opening doors. And yours opens much more easily than some I come across. Would you believe it, some people positively nail their doors up, and it's no good knocking. But there, you're wondering who I am.

Pierrette. I was wondering if you were hungry.

Man. Ah, a woman's instinct. But, thank you, no. I am a small eater; I might say a very small eater. A smile or a squeeze of the hand keeps me going admirably.

Pierrette. At least you'll sit down and make yourself at home.

Man. [*moving to the settle*]. Well, I have a habit of making myself at home everywhere. In fact, most people think you can't make a *home* without *me*. May I put my feet on the fender? It's an old habit of mine. I always do it.

Pierrette. They say round here:

Without feet on the fender
Love is but slender.

Man. Quite right. It is the whole secret of the domestic fireside. Pierrette, you have been crying.

Pierrette. I believe I have.

Man. Bless you, I know all about it. It's Pierrot. And so you're in love with him, and he doesn't care a little bit about you, eh? What a strange old world it is! And you cry your eyes out over him.

Pierrette. Oh, no, I don't often cry. But to-night he seemed more grumpy than usual, and I tried so hard to cheer him up.

Man. Grumpy, is he?

Pierrette. He doesn't mean it, though. It's the cold weather, and the show hasn't been paying so well lately. Pierrot wants to write an article about us for the local paper by way of an advertisement. He thinks the editor may print it if he gives him free passes for his family.

Man. Do you think Pierrot is worth your tears?

Pierrette. Oh, yes!

Man. You know, tears are not to be wasted. We only have a certain amount of them given to us just for keeping the heart moist. And when we've used them all up and haven't any more, the heart dries up, too.

Pierrette. Pierrot is a splendid fellow. You don't know him as well as I do. It's true he's always discontented, but it's only because he's not in love with any one. You know, love does make a tremendous difference in a man.

Man. That's true enough. And has it made a difference in you?

Pierrette. Oh, yes! I put Pierrot's slippers down to warm, and I make tea for him, and all the time I'm happy because I'm doing something for him. If I weren't in love, I should find it a drudgery.

Man. Are you sure it's real love?

Pierrette. Why, yes!

Man. But why is it that Pierrot can wake up all this poetry in you?

Pierrette. Because—oh, because he's just Pierrot.

Man. "Because he's just Pierrot." The same old reason.

Pierrette. Of course, he is a bit dreamy. But that's his soul. I am sure he could do great things if he tried. And have you noticed his smile? Isn't it lovely! Sometimes, when he's not looking, I want ever so much to try it on, just to see how I should look in it. [*Pensively.*] But I wish he'd smile at me a little more often, instead of at others.

Man. Ho! So he smiles at others, does he?

Pierrette. Hardly a day goes by but there's some fine lady at the show. There was one there to-day, a tall girl with red cheeks. He is gone to look for her now. And it is not their faults. The poor things can't help being in love with him. [*Proudly.*] I believe every one is in love with Pierrot.

Man. But supposing one of these fine ladies were to marry him?

Pierrette. Oh, they'd never do that. A fine lady would never marry a poor singer. If Pierrot were to get married, I think I should just... fade away...Oh, but I don't know why I talk to you like this. I feel as if I had known you for a long, long time.

THE MANUFACTURER *rises from the settle and moves across to* PIERRETTE *who is now folding up the white cloth.*

Man. [*very slowly*]. Perhaps you *have* known me for a long, long time.

His tone is so kindly and impressive that PIERRETTE *forgets the table-cloth and looks up at him. For a moment or two he smiles back at her as she gazes, spellbound; then he turns away to the fire again, with the little chuckle that is never far from his lips.*

Pierrette [*taking a small bow from his side-pocket*]. Oh, look at this.

Man. [*in mock alarm*]. Oh, oh, I didn't mean you to see that. I'd forgotten it was sticking out of my pocket. I used to do a lot of archery at one time. I don't get much chance now.

He takes it and puts it back in his pocket.

Pierrot [*singing in the distance*].

Baby, don't wait for the moon,
She is drawing the sea in her net;
And mellow and musical June
Is teaching the rose to forget.

Man. [*in a whisper as the voice draws nearer*]. Who is that?

Pierrette. Pierrot.

Again the conical white hat flashes past the window and PIERROT *enters*

Pierrot. I can't find her anywhere. [*Seeing the* MANUFACTURER.] Hullo! Who are you?

Man. I am a stranger to you, but Pierrette knew me in a moment.

Pierrot. An old flame perhaps?

Man. True, I am an old flame. I've lighted up the world for a considerable time. Yet when you say "old," there are many people who think I'm wonderfully well preserved for my age. How long do you think I've been trotting about?

Pierrot [*testily, measuring a length with his hands*]. Oh, about that long.

Man. I suppose being funny all day *does* get on your nerves.

Pierrette. Pierrot, you needn't be rude.

Man. [*anxious to be alone with* PIERROT]. Pierrette, have you got supper in?

Pierrette. Oh, I must fly! The shops will all be shut. Will you be here when I come back?

Man. [*bustling her out*]. I can't promise, but I'll try, I'll try.

PIERRETTE *goes out. There is a silence, during which* THE MANUFACTURER *regards* PIERROT *with amusement*

Man. Well, friend Pierrot, so business is not very brisk.

Pierrot. Brisk! If laughter meant business, it would be brisk enough, but there's no money. However, I've done one good piece of work to-day. I've arranged with the editor to put an article in the paper. That will fetch 'em. [*Singing.*]

Please come one day and see our house that's
down among the trees,
But do not come at four o'clock for then we
count the bees,
And bath the tadpoles and the frogs, who
splash the clouds with gold,
And watch the new-cut cucum*bers* perspiring
with the cold.

That's a song I'm writing.

Man. Pierrot, if you had all the money in the world you wouldn't be happy.

Pierrot. Wouldn't I? Give me all the money in the world and I'll risk

it. To start with, I'd build schools to educate the people up to high-class things.

Man. You dream of fame and wealth and empty ideals, and you miss all the best things there are. You are discontented. Why? Because you don't know how to be happy.

Pierrot [*reciting*].

Life's a running brooklet,
Catch the fishes there,
You who wrote a booklet
On a woman's hair.

[*explaining.*] That's another song I'm writing. It's the second verse. Things come to me all of a sudden like that. I must run out a third verse, just to wind it up.

Man. Why don't you write a song without any end, one that goes on for ever?

Pierrot. I say, that's rather silly, isn't it?

Man. It all depends. For a song of that sort the singer must be always happy.

Pierrot. That wants a bit of doing in my line.

Man. Shall you and I transact a little business?

Pierrot. By all means. What seats would you like? There are the front rows covered in velvet, one shilling; wooden benches behind, sixpence; and, right at the back, the twopenny part. But, of course, you'll have shilling ones. How many shall we say?

Man. You don't know who I am.

Pierrot. That makes no difference. All are welcome, and we thank you for your courteous attention.

Man. Pierrot, I am a maker of dreams.

Pierrot. A what?

Man. I make all the dreams that float about this musty world.

Pierrot. I say, you'd better have a rest for a bit. I expect you're a trifle done up.

Man. Pierrot, Pierrot, your superior mind can't tumble to my calling. A child or one of the "people" would in a moment. I am a maker of dreams, little things that glide about into people's hearts and make them glad. Haven't you often wondered where the swallows go to in the autumn? They come to my workshop, and tell me who wants a dream, and what happened to the dreams they took with them in the spring.

Pierrot. Oh, I say, you can't expect me to believe that.

Man. When flowers fade, have you never wondered where their colours go to, or what becomes of all the butterflies in the winter? There isn't much winter about my workshop.

Pierrot. I had never thought of it before.

Man. It's a kind of lost property office, where every beautiful thing that the world has neglected finds its way. And there I make my celebrated dream, the dream that is called "love."

Pierrot. Ho! Ho! Now we're talking.

Man. You don't believe in it?

Pierrot. Yes, in a way. But it doesn't last. It doesn't last. If there is form, there isn't soul, and, if there is soul, there isn't form. Oh, I've tried hard enough to believe it, but, after the first wash, the colours run.

Man. You only got hold of a substitute. Wait until you see the genuine article.

Pierrot. But how is one to tell it?

Man. There are heaps of signs. As soon as you get the real thing, your shoulder-blades begin to tingle. That's love's wings sprouting. And, next, you want to soar up among the stars and sit on the roof of heaven and sing to the moon. Of course, that's because I put such a lot of the moon into my dreams. I break bits off until it's nearly gone, and then I let it grow big again. It grows very quickly, as I dare say you've noticed. After a fortnight it is ready for use once more.

Pierrot. This is most awfully fascinating. And do the swallows bring all the dreams?

Man. Not always; I have other messengers. Every night when the big clock strikes twelve, a day slips down from the calendar, and runs away to my workshop in the Land of Long Ago. I give him a touch of scarlet and a gleam of gold, and say, "Go back, little Yesterday, and be a memory in the world." But my best dreams I keep for to-day.

Pierrot. I've been dreaming all my life, but they've always been dreams I made myself. I suppose I don't mix 'em properly.

Man. You leave out the very essence of them. You must put in a little sorrow, just to take away the over-sweetness. I found that out very soon, so I took a little of the fresh dew that made pearls in the early morning, and I sprinkled my dreams with the gift of tears.

Pierrot [*ecstatically*]. The gift of tears! How beautiful! You know, I should rather like to try a real one. Not one of my own making.

Man. Well, there are plenty about, if you only look for them.

Pierrot. That is all very well, but who's going to look about for stray dreams?

Man. I once made a dream that would just suit you. I slipped it inside a baby. That was twenty years ago, and the baby is now a full-grown woman, with great blue eyes and fair hair.

Pierrot. It's a lot of use merely telling me about her.

Man. I'll do more. When I shipped her to the world, I kept the bill of lading. Here it is. You shall have it.

Pierrot. Thanks, but what's the good of it?

Man. Why, the holder of that is able to claim the goods; you will notice it contains a complete description, too. I promise you, you're in luck.

Pierrot. Has she red cheeks and a string of great beads?

Man. No.

Pierrot. Ah, then it is not she. Where shall I find her?

Man. That's for you to discover. All you have to do is to search.

Pierrot. I'll start at once.

He moves as if to go.

Man. I shouldn't start out to-night.

Pierrot. But I want to find her soon. Somebody else may find her before me.

Man. Pierrot, there was once a man who wanted to gather mushrooms.

Pierrot [*annoyed at the commonplace*]. Mushrooms!

Man. Fearing people would be up before him, he started out overnight. Morning came, and he found none, so he returned disconsolate to his house. As he came through the garden, he found a great mushroom had grown up in the night by his very door-step. Take the advice of one who knows, and wait a bit.

Pierrot. If that's your advice... But tell me this, do you think I shall find her?

Man. I can't say for certain. Would you consider yourself a fool?

Pierrot. Ah...of course...when you ask me a direct thing like that, you make it...er...rather awkward for me. But, if I may say so, as man to ma...I mean as man to...[*He hesitates*].

Man. [*waiving the point*]. Yes, yes.

Pierrot. Well, I flatter myself that . . .

Man. Exactly. And that's your principal danger. Whilst you are striding along gazing at the stars, you may be treading on a little glow-worm. Shall I give you a third verse for your song?

> Life's a woman calling,
> Do not stop your ears,
> Lest, when night is falling,
> Darkness brings you tears.

The Manufacturer's kindly and impressive tone holds PIERROT *as it had held* PIERRETTE *some moments before. Whilst the two are looking at each other, a little red cloak dances past the window, and* PIERRETTE *enters with her marketing*

Pierrette. Oh, I'm so glad you're still here.

Man. But I must be going now. I am a great traveller.

Pierrette [*standing against the door, so that he cannot pass*]. Oh, you mustn't go yet.

Man. Don't make me fly out of the window. I only do that under very unpleasant circumstances.

Pierrot [*gaily with mock eloquence*]. Pierrette, regard our visitor. You little knew whom you were entertaining. You see before you the maker of the dreams that slip about the world like little fish among the rushes of a stream. He has given me the bill of lading of his great masterpiece, and it only remains for me to find her. [*Dropping to the commonplace.*] I wish I knew where to look.

Man. Before I go, I will give you this little rhyme:

> Let every woman keep a school,
> For every man is born a fool.

[*He bows, and goes out quickly and silently*

Pierrette [*running to the door, and looking out*]. Why, how quickly he has gone! He's out of sight.

Pierrot. At last I am about to attain my great ideal. There will be a grand wedding, and I shall wear my white coat with the silver braid, and carry a tall gold-topped stick. [*Singing.*]

> If we play any longer, I fear you will get
> Such a cold in the head, for the grass is so wet.
> But during the night, Margareta divine,
> I will hang the wet grass up to dry on the line.

Pierrette, I feel that I am about to enter into a man's inheritance, a woman's love.

Courtesy of the Port Washington High School

"Let every woman keep a school,
For every man is born a fool."

Down's *The Maker of Dreams*, as given at the Port Washington (New York) High School

Pierrette. I wish you every happiness.

Pierrot [*singing teasingly*].

We shall meet in our dreams, that's a thing understood;
You dream of the river, I'll dream of the wood.
I am visiting you, if the river it be;
If we meet in the wood, you are visiting me.

Pierrette. We must make lots of money, so that you can give her all she wants. I'll dance and dance until I fall, and the people will exclaim, "Why, she has danced herself to death."

Pierrot. You're right. We must pull the show together. I'll do that article for the paper at once. [*He takes paper, ink, etc., from the dresser, and, seating himself at the table, commences to write.*] "There has lately come to this town a company of strolling players, who give a show that is at once muscial and droll. The audience is enthralled by Pierrot's magnificent singing and dancing, and...er...very much entertained by Pierrette's homely dancing. Pierrette is a charming comedienne of twenty, with . . ." what colour hair?

Pierrette. Fair, quite fair.

Pierrot. Funny how one can see a person every day and not know the colour of their hair. "Fair hair and . . ." eyes?

Pierrette. Blue, Pierrot.

Pierrot. "Fair hair and blue eyes." Fair! Blue! Oh, of course it's nonsense, though.

Pierrette. What's nonsense?

Pierrot. Something I was thinking. Most girls have fair hair and blue eyes.

Pierrette. Yes, Pierrot, we can't all be ideals.

Pierrot. How musical your voice sounds! I can't make it out. Oh, but, of course, it *is* all nonsense!

He takes the bill of lading from his pocket and reads it.

Pierrette. What's nonsense?..... Pierrot, won't you tell me?

Pierrot. Pierrette, stand in the light.

Pierrette. Is anything the matter?

Pierrot. I almost believe that nothing matters. [*Reading and glancing at her.*] "Eyes that say 'I love you'; arms that say 'I want you'; lips that say 'Why don't you?' " Pierrette, is it possible! I've never noticed before how beautiful you are. You don't seem a bit the same. I believe you have lost your real face, and have carved another out of a rose.

Pierrette. Oh, Pierrot, what is it?

Pierrot. Love! I've found it at last. Don't you understand it all?

I am a fool
Who has learned wisdom in your school.

To think that I've seen you every day, and never dreamed...dreamed! Yes, ah yes, it's one of his beautiful dreams. That is why my heart seems full of the early morning.

Pierrette. Ah, Pierrot!

Pierrot. Oh, how my shoulders tingle! I want to soar up, up. Don't you want to fly up to the roof of heaven and sing among the stars?

Pierrette. I have been sitting on the moon ever so long, waiting for my lover. Pierrot, let me try on your smile. Give it to me in a kiss.

With their hands outstretched behind them they lean towards each other, till their lips meet in a long kiss.

Pierrette [*throwing back her head with a deep sigh of happiness*]. Oh, I am so happy. This might be the end of all things.

Pierrot. Pierrette, let us sit by the fire and put our feet on the fender, and live happily ever after. [*They have moved slowly to the settle. As they sit there,* PIERROT *sings softly.*]

Baby, don't wait for the moon,
The stairs of the sky are so steep;
And mellow and musical June
Is waiting to kiss you to sleep.

The lamp on the hood of the chimney-piece has burned down, leaving only the red glow from the fire upon their faces, as the curtain whispers down to hide them.

PEGGY[1]

A TRAGEDY OF THE TENANT FARMER

HAROLD WILLIAMSON

CAST OF CHARACTERS

WILL WARREN, *a tenant farmer*
MAG WARREN, *his wife*
PEGGY, *their daughter, aged 18*
HERMAN, *their son, aged 6*
JED, *a farm hand, in love with Peggy*
JOHN MCDONALD, *the landowner*
WESLEY MCDONALD, *his son, a University student*

SCENE: A tenant farm in North Carolina. The bare living-room of a two-room cabin.

TIME: The present. An April evening, about seven o'clock.

SCENE: *The scene is laid in one of the two rooms of a tenant shack. In the centre of the room is a square eating-table with an oil-cloth cover. On each side of the table is a straw-bottom chair. A small, worn cook-stove is in the left corner and beside it a wood-box. At the right of the stove is a rectangular table on which are a dishpan and other cooking utensils. Against the back wall is a cupboard which holds the meagre supply of tableware. On top of it are several paper sacks and pasteboard boxes containing cooking materials. A door in the right side leads from the eating-room into the only other room of the shack, used as a sleeping-room. A door at the back on the left leads outdoors. Through this doorway can be seen a crude string lattice-work partly covered by a growing vine, and a shelf supporting a bucket and gourd. A small window is at the right in the back wall. The floor and walls are bare. Everything has a fairly neat appearance but suggests the struggle against a degrading poverty.*

As the curtain rises MAG WARREN *is busily preparing supper, singing as she works.* HERMAN *is sitting on the floor tying a piece of rope to the end of a broom handle.*

MAG WARREN *is a thin, bent, overworked woman of forty-two. Her face reveals the strain of years of drudgery. Her thin hair is drawn tightly into a knot on the back of her head. She wears a cheap calico dress and a faded checkered apron. In the pocket of her apron is a large snuff can. A protruding snuff-brush claims the right*

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corner of her mouth.[1] *She beats up a batter of cornbread, pours it into a pan on the stove, and after pouring some water into a large coffee-pot, she begins to slice some "fatback."*[2]

HERMAN *is an under-sized boy of six years with a vacant expression on his pinched face. He wears a faded shirt, and a lone suspender over his right shoulder gives scanty support for his patched pants, which strike him midway between the knee and the ankle. He is barefooted. When he finishes fixing his "horse," he gets up, straddles the stick, and trots over all the unoccupied part of the room.* *Mag* [*singing*].

A rich man lay on his velvet couch,
He ate from plates of gold;—
A poor girl stood on the marble steps,
And said, "So cold, so cold."—

Three years rolled by and the rich man died,
He descended to fiery hell,—
The poor girl lay in the angel's arms,
And sighed, "All's well, all's well."—

Herman. Git up, Kit . . .whoa . . . ha. [*Whipping the stick.*] What's the matter? Cain't you plow straight?

In his trotting he runs into MAG *at the stove. She turns on him angrily.*

Mag. Git out'n my way an' git over thar in the corner. [*Utterly subdued,* HERMAN *goes and sits in the corner while* MAG *goes on with her work. Presently she turns to him.*] Go git me a turn o' wood, an' don't you take all day about it neither.

HERMAN *goes out.* MAG *continues to sing, moving about between the table, stove, and cupboard as she prepares the meal.* JED SMITH *enters. He is a tall, lanky, uncanny-looking fellow of twenty-four. He is dressed in the shabby shirt and faded blue overalls of an ordinary poor farm-laborer. He walks in slowly and lazily and says nothing. As he goes to the table* MAG *looks up at him from her work*

Mag. I thought you was Will, Jed. [*She continues her work.*] Seen anything o' Pegg? Hit's a-gittin' mighty high time she's back here.

Jed [*Pulls out a chair from the table, flops down in it, and begins whittling on a stick*]. That's what I come to see you about, Mag.

Mag [*stopping her work and looking around at* JED]. Ain't nothin' happened, air there, Jed?

Jed. Nothin' to git skeered about, but ol' man McDonald's boy come in from one o' them 'air colleges th' other day an' I jest seen Pegg down yonder a-talkin' to him an' a-lookin' at him mighty sweet-like. 'Tain't the fust time neither.

Mag [*Goes up nearer to* JED]. So that's what's been a-keepin' her?

Jed. Yeah, an' if you don't watch out, Mag, there's a tale goin' to git out an' ol' man McDonald'll drive you off'n the place.

Mag. You're right, Jed. Jest wait till me an' her pa gits through with her. We'll put a stop to it.

Jed [*nervously*]. Now don't go an' tell her I told you, Mag.

Mag. You needn't be skeered. I been a-thinkin' as much myself. She's been powerful uppity lately, but I

[1] The habit of "dipping snuff" is common among the poor whites in all sections of North Carolina. A twig is chewed into shreds at one end and is known as a snuff-stick or "tooth-brush." This is dipped into the powdered snuff and then rubbed over the gums and teeth. The women seem to get much satisfaction from this practice.

[2] "Fatback" is fat salt pork which, together with cornbread, forms the main part of the diet of "hog and hominy" eaten by poor whites the year 'round.

didn't know what about. Her pa's allus said that perty face o' hern would be the ruinin' of her. Don't you know Wes McDonald wouldn't be a-havin' nothin' to do with Pegg 'lessen she was perty?

Jed. Naw.

Mag. She's clear out'n his class an' ain't got sense enough to know it. [*She turns the corn cake in the pan*]. An' it's a perty way she's a-doin' you, Jed.

Jed [*drearily*]. Yeah, I reckon she ain't likin' me no more.

HERMAN *returns with the wood and throws it in the box.*

Mag. Ain't she said she'd marry you?

Jed. Aw, she did onc't.

Mag. An' you're a good match for her, too. Will's a-been a-sayin' how good you are at the plow.

Jed. I'd shore like to have her, Mag.

Mag. Well, if you want her you can git her, Jed. She's done a right smart o' washin' an' a-cookin' an' a-hoein' in her day an' I reckon she'll make you a good woman.

Jed. I ain't a-worryin' about that.

Mag [*looking out of the window*]. Yonder she comes now. Ain't no tellin' what fool notions that boy has been a-puttin' in her head, but you jest wait till me an' her pa gits through with her.

Jed [*rising nervously*]. Reckon I'll be a-goin' now, Mag.

Mag. Ain't you goin' to wait an' see Pegg? 'Pears like you'd be a-pushin' yourself.

Jed. Naw, I . . . I'll come back after I eat.

Mag. Well, you come back. Me an' her pa'll have her in a notion then.

Her. [*Stops* JED *as he is going out*]. Gimme some terbaccer, Jed.

Jed [*Feels in his pockets*]. I ain't got none, Herman.

[*He goes out*

Mag. What'd I tell you about axin' folks for terbaccer? When you want terbaccer ax you pa for it.

Her. He won't gimme none.

Mag. Well, it don't make no odds. You don't do nothin' but waste it nohow.

HERMAN *sits down on the floor to the front and begins to play aimlessly.*

PEGGY *comes in, flushed and happy. She is a pretty girl of eighteen years. She has attractive features, is of medium height, slim and lively. Her hair is light and becomingly disheveled. Her dress is extremely simple but shows signs of care*

Peggy. Supper ready, ma?

Mag. Cain't you see it ain't? Why ain't you been here long ago a-helpin' me to git supper?

Peg. [*putting the milk bucket she has brought in with her on the table, she goes over to the left to hang up her bonnet*]. I couldn't finish milkin' no sooner.

Mag. You needn't tell me you been a-milkin' all this time. Where you been anyhow?

Peg. I stopped to help Lizzie Taylor hang out her wash.

Mag. Been anywheres else?

Peg. No'm.

Mag. Well, git busy a-fixin' that table, an' tell me what fool notions Wes McDonald's been a-puttin' into your head.

Peg. [*She tries to look surprised*]. I don't know nothin' 'bout Wes McDonald, ma.

Mag. Don't you lie to your ma like that, Pegg. You think I don't know nothin' 'bout it, but you cain't fool your ma. He's been a-settin' up to you, ain't he?

Peg. No, ma, he ain't said nothin' to me, he . . .

Mag. Now be keerful.

Peg. He jest spoke to me, an' I jest axed him how he liked to go off to school an' he said he liked it an' he axed me why I wasn't goin' to school an' I told him I had to work.

Mag. Didn't he say nothin' 'bout your bein' perty?

Peg. [*proudly*]. Yes, he said I was perty. Said if I had book-learnin' an' lived uptown I'd be the pick o' the whole bunch.

Mag. That's what I was a-thinkin' he'd be a-puttin' into your head. You keep out'n Wes McDonald's way. He ain't a-keerin' nothin' for you and besides he'll git you into trouble. Wait till your pa hears o' this.

There is a silence while MAG *goes on with her work.*

Peg. [*looking out of the window, wistfully*]. I reckon it'd be nice to go to school.

Mag. Mebbe it is. If you'd a-been rich, schoolin' might a-done you some good, but you ain't rich an' schoolin's only for them as is rich. Me an' your pa never had no schoolin', and I reckon you can git along 'thout any yourself. [*She goes to the door and looks off anxiously across the fields.*] Hit's high time your pa was a-gittin' home.

Her. I'd like to see pa myself. Want some terbaccer.

Mag [*Comes to the front. Solemnly*]. I been mighty skeered 'bout your pa ever since the doctor told him he had that 'air misery round his heart.

Peg. Did he say 'twas dangerous?

Mag [*going back to stove*]. Well, he said your pa was liable to keel over most any time if he ain't mighty keerful. Ol' man McDonald's got him down yonder in that 'air new ground a-bustin' roots an' it ain't a-doin' your pa no good neither.

Peg. I jest seen pa an' Mr. McDonald a-talkin' together an' both of 'em was mighty mad about somethin'.

Mag. I reckon your pa struck him for a raise, an' he ought to have it. A dollar an' a quarter a day ain't enough, workin' like your pa does, but ol' man McDonald'd see your pa clear to hell afore he'd pay him a cent more. [*She goes to the door, takes the snuff-brush from her mouth and spits out the snuff. She puts the snuff-brush in her pocket, takes a drink of water from the gourd and washes her mouth out with it, spitting out the water. She speaks to* PEGGY *as she turns back to the stove*]. There's them cabbages your pa told you to hoe an' you ain't done it, have you?

Peg. No, ma, I ain't had time.

Mag. You had a-plenty o' time to let Wes McDonald put a lot o' fool notions in your head. You'll have a perty time a-tellin' your pa you ain't had time. [*There is a pause.*] Jed said as how he might come around after he's eat. Hit's a perty way you been a-treatin' Jed an' he ain't a-likin' it neither.

Peg. I don't care if he likes it or not. 'Tain't none o' his business.

Mag. Hit ain't? Ain't you done told him you was a-goin' to marry him?

Peg. I might have onc't, but I've changed my mind.

Mag [*angrily*]. What's come over you anyhow?

Peg. Nothin', ma.

Mag. Well, I'd like to know what you think you're a-goin' to do? 'Tain't every man a woman can git, an' you ought to thank the Lord Jed's given you the chanct.

Peg. I ain't a-wantin' it. I ain't a-goin' to marry Jed an' have to work like a dog all my life—besides, I got to love the man I marry.

Mag [*scornfully*]. Love? What's love got to do with your bread an' meat? You been a-readin' some o' them magazines as they git down at the house. I'd like to know what you think you're goin' to do?

Peg. [*resolved*]. I'm goin' to git me a job up town an' *be* somebody!

Mag. There ain't nothin' you could do there. You was raised on a farm, an' I reckon that's jest about the place for you. You don't think you're better'n your ma, do you?

Peg. No, ma, but I could git me a job in the Five an' Ten Cent Store. Mary Cameron's got her a job there, an' she's a-wearin' fine clothes an' got a lot o' fellows.

Mag. Yes, an' there's a lot a-bein' said as to how she got them clothes. I tell you, me an' your pa ain't a-goin' to have nothin' like that.

Peg. But, ma, I—

Mag. Shet up. You behave yourself like you ought to before Jed. If you don't, you better.

Peg. I'll treat him all right but I ain't a-goin' to marry him.

Mag. Me an' your pa'll say if you will or not, an'—

Peg. The bread's a-burnin', ma!

Mag [*running quickly across the room she jerks the bread off the stove and dumps it into a pan on the table*]. Good Lord, now don't that beat you? An' there ain't no more meal. [*She looks out of the door*]. Yonder comes your pa, too. Hurry up an' git that table laid while I git a bucket o' water.

[*She takes the pail and hurries off* WILL WARREN *comes in heavily. He is a slouchy, hump-shouldered man of fifty years. His hair is long and his face unshaven. He wears an old, dirty, sweat-ridden black hat with a shaggy brim; a faded blue denim shirt; brown corduroy pants, worn slick, attached to a large pair of suspenders by nails; and brogan shoes with heavy gray socks falling over the top. He drags himself in and stands propped against the side of the door. His face is white and he appears entirely exhausted*

Her. [*going up to* WILL]. Gimme some terbaccer, pa. [WILL *pays no attention to him.*] Pa, gimme some terbaccer.

Will [*giving* HERMAN *a slap on the face that sends him to the floor*]. Git to hell away from me.

He comes into the room slowly and unsteadily, pulls off his hat and throws it into the corner, and falls into a chair by the table, breathing heavily and staring blankly. He says nothing.

Peg. [*She notices* WILL'S *heavy breathing and is alarmed*]. What's the matter, pa, ain't you feelin' well?

Will [*struggling for breath*]. Gimme . . . some coffee . . . quick!

Peg. [*quickly pouring a cup of coffee and giving it to him. He gulps it down*

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Scene from *Peggy* as presented by the Carolina Playmakers. The author appears, standing behind the table

and appears considerably relieved]. You ain't sick, air you, pa?

Will. Naw. . . . It's another one o 'them durned miseries round my heart. [*He gulps the coffee.*] I ain't a-goin' to work another day in that durned new ground. I told McDonald I wouldn't an' damned if I do.

Mag [*who has now come back, and has overheard his words*]. I don't blame you for sayin' so, but there ain't no use in flyin' off'n the handle like that.

Will. Well, I said it an' I'll do it. These here money men like McDonald think as how they can work a poor man like me to death an' pay me nothin' for it neither, but durned if I don't show him.

Mag. What'd he say when you axed him for a raise?

Will. Aw, he said he was a-losin' money every year. He allus says that. Says he ain't a-raisin' enough to pay for the growin' of it, but don't you reckon I know how much he's a-raisin'? He's a-gittin' thirty cents a pound for his cotton an' two dollar a bushel for his corn, an' then he says he ain't a-makin' nothin'. He cain't lie to me, he's a-gittin' rich.

Mag. Course he is. Ain't he jest bought another one o' them automobiles th' other day?

Will. Yeah, an' while him an' that no'count boy o' his'n are a-ridin' around in it I'm down yonder in that 'air new ground a-gittin' a dollar an' a quarter a day for killin' myself over them durned roots. Jest afore quittin' time I come mighty nigh givin' out.

Mag [*She brings the corn bread and "fatback" and puts it on the table.* PEGGY *busies herself at the table and cupboard*]. You better take keer o' yourself. You know what the doctor told you.

Will. Yeah, but how in the devil can I help it like things are now? I told him what's what a while ago, an' damned if I don't stick to it too. [*He looks over the table.*] What you got for supper? [*Seeing the burnt bread, he picks it up and hurls it to the floor*]. What kind o' durned cookin' do you call this you're doin', anyway?

Mag. It wouldn't a-happened if Pegg hadn't been a-pesterin' me.

Will [*angrily to* PEGGY]. Well, what you been a-doin'?

Peg. Nothin', pa.

Mag. In the fust place, you told her to hoe them cabbages.

Will. Ain't you done it?

Mag. No, she ain't done it, but she's been down yonder a-lettin' Wes McDonald put a lot o' fool notions into her head about her bein' perty, an' now she says she ain't a-going to marry Jed.

Will [*savagely to* PEGGY]. You ain't, air you?

Peg. [*half crying but defiant*]. No, pa, I ain't. I've seen you an' ma a-workin' from sun-up to sun-down like niggers an' jest a-makin' enough to keep us out'n the poor house, an' I ain't a-going to live no sich life with Jed. He couldn't do no better.

Will. Well, durn your hide . . .

Mag. An' she says she'll git her a job up-town like Mary Cameron's got. You know what's a-bein' said about Mary! [*To* PEGGY]. Don't you know we ain't a-goin' to have nothin' like that?

She shakes her finger at PEGGY.

Peg. But, ma, I . . .

Will. Shet up. We've raised you up here an' it's us as'll say what you'll

do. Jed axed you to marry him an' durn it, you'll do it, too.

Peg. I won't.

Will [*rising from the chair*]. You won't? Don't you let me hear you say that agin.

Peg. [*wildly*]. I won't, I won't, I won't!

Will [*in uncontrolled rage*]. Then, damn you, you can git right out'n this house right now an' . . .

Mag. Hush, Will, hush.

Will [*breathing heavily and struggling in his speech*]. An' don't you . . let . . . me ever . . . see you . . . .agin . . .

Clutching his hands to his heart, he gasps, staggers backward, then falls heavily to the floor. The women stand stunned for a moment, then MAG *rushes over, kneels by him, and shakes him.*

Mag. Will, Will, . . . answer me, Will, . . . say somethin'. [*Turning to* PEGGY, *who has not moved, and speaking dully.*] Lord, Pegg, he's dead . . . your pa's dead . . . he's gone. Send for somebody . . . quick!

Peg. [*excitedly to* HERMAN]. Run tell Mister McDonald to come here quick. He's down at the house. Go git him quick! [HERMAN *runs out.* MAG, *shaking with sobs, crouches over the body. Her head is buried in her apron.* PEGGY *tries to comfort her mother.*] Don't carry on like that, ma. It ain't a-doin' no good. [*Hopefully.*] Mebbe he ain't dead.

Mag. Yes, he is. He's gone. . . . Oh, Lord . . . I knowed it'd git him.

JED *appears at the door and stands stupefied for a moment*

Jed [*coming into the room*]. What's the matter? [*Going nearer to the body.*] What's the matter with Will?

Mag. He's gone, Jed, he's gone. O Lord!

Jed. He ain't dead, is he? Who done it?

JED *kneels over the body and examines it for signs of life.* MAG *rises slowly, shuffles to a chair on the other side of the table and sits sobbing.*

PEG. [*appealing*]. Is he dead, Jed, is he dead?

Jed. I don't know. Git some camphor, quick.

PEGGY *runs into the other room for the camphor bottle*

JOHN MCDONALD *enters, followed by his son,* WESLEY. *The farm-owner is a tall, prosperous-looking man of forty-eight. He has a hard face and stern, overbearing manner*

WESLEY *is a rather handsome young fellow of twenty-one, a typical well-dressed college boy.*

McDonald [*to* JED, *taking in the scene at a glance*]. What's the matter? Is he dead?

Jed [*rising*]. I believe he is, Mister McDonald.

McD. How did it happen?

Jed. I don't know.

Mag [*sobbing*]. He's gone, Mister McDonald, he's gone. . . . He had another one of them fits with his heart jest like the doctor said he would, an' he went all of a sudden afore I knowed it.

McD. [*examining the body*]. Well, he's dead all right, sure. [PEGGY *runs in with the camphor bottle.*] That's no use, he's dead. Jed, let's put him on the bed in the other room.

[*They carry the body off the stage,* MAG *following*

Wesley. I'm awfully sorry, Peggy. Tell me how it happened.

Peg. [*crying*]. He got mad with me because I said I wouldn't marry Jed, an' he jest got madder an' madder an' told me to leave an' never come back. An' then he put his hands up to his heart like this, an' fell over.

Wes. Did he have heart trouble?

Peg. Yeah, I reckon so. He's been a-havin' pains in his side, an' a-chokin' for wind, an' the doctor said he'd have to be keerful.

Wes. And he wanted you to marry Jed?

Peg. Yeah, he said I'd have to.

Wes. [*understandingly*]. And you didn't want to?

Peg. No, if I married him I'd have to work like a dog all my life, an' I ain't a-goin' to do it.

Wes. I don't blame you, Peggy, but what are you going to do?

Peg. I'm goin' to git me a job uptown.

Wes. You mustn't go there, Peggy. You couldn't get along there.

Peg. [*looking to him wistfully*]. Well, what can I do?

Wes. [*thoughtfully*]. I don't know . . . . . I guess you'd better marry Jed. [*There is a pause.* Peggy *goes over to the window and looks out hopelessly.*] If everything was different I'd . . . Oh, I didn't mean that. You see such a thing would be impossible.

Peg. [*turning to him, hopefully*]. But I could . . .

Wes. Stop, Peggy. . . . I think a lot of you but don't you see I couldn't do more? It's impossible. Don't cry that way, Peggy. I'm sorry I said what I did this afternoon. I didn't mean to upset you like this. Go on and marry Jed. He's all right and I'll see that he gets a good showing.

Peg. [*desperately*]. But I don't want to. I know how it'll turn out.

McDonald *and* Jed *return, followed by* Mag

Mag [*without hope*]. What's a-goin' to come of us now?

McD. [*brusquely*]. I don't know, Mag.

Mag. You ain't a-goin' to make us leave, air you?

McD. Let's not talk about that now.

Mag. But tell me, Mister McDonald, will we have to leave?

McD. [*impatient*]. Well, if you just must know right now, Mag, I'm sorry to say it, but I don't see how I can keep you here.

Mag [*imploring him*]. For God's sake don't make us leave the place!

McD. Now don't get foolish, Mag. You see it's a business proposition with me. With Will gone there's nothing you and your family could do on the farm that would pay me to keep you here. It's the man I need, especially now when there is so much plowing to be done, and as soon as I can I will have to get another man to take Will's place. Of course he will have to live in this house.

Mag [*resentful*]. After Will has worked for you steady for sixteen year you ain't a-goin' to turn me out now, air you?

McD. I'm sorry if you look at it in that way, Mag, but business is business, and I can't afford to keep you here.

Mag. But, Mister McDonald, we ain't got nowhere else to go . . . an' we'd starve to death.

She turns away sobbing.

McD. You ought to be thankful for what I've done for Will. He was about the sorriest hand I ever had. There's absolutely nothing you can do. I can't keep you.

Wes. But, father, you can't turn them away like this.

McD. It's time you were learning that business is not a charitable institution, Wesley. I'm trying to run a farm, not a hard-luck asylum.

Jed. Mister McDonald, let me see you a minute.

He goes over and whispers to McDONALD.

McD. [*to* JED]. Well, if you do that everything will be all right! [PEGGY *looks up hopefully. He turns to* MAG.] Jed has just said that if Peggy would marry him he will let you and the boy stay here in the house with them. If you want to do that it will be all right with me.

PEGGY, *disheartened, sits down by the table and buries her head in her arms, crying.*

Mag. You'll marry Jed, won't you, Pegg? You'll do it for your ma, won't you?

McD. Well, I'll leave that for you to decide. You can let me know later. [*Going to the door.*] Come, Wesley. I'll send to town for something to put him in, and Jed can get help to dig the grave. If you want anything, let me know.

[McDONALD *and* WESLEY *go out.* WESLEY *hesitates in the door a moment, looking with sympathy at* PEGGY

Jed [*He goes slowly and uneasily over to* PEGGY]. You ain't a-goin' to turn me down, air you, Peggy?

Mag [*imploring*]. You'll marry Jed, won't you, Pegg? You ain't a-goin' to see your ol' ma go to the poor-house, air you, Pegg?

Peg. [*After a moment of silence she raises her head and speaks in broken sobs*]. I reckon . . . it's the only way . . . for me.

CURTAIN.

THE COMING OF FAIR ANNIE[1]

A PLAY BASED UPON THE OLD BALLAD "LOVE GREGOR"

GRAHAM PRICE

CHARACTERS

LOVE GREGOR, *a poet. Chief of the Clan Gregor*
LADY GREGOR, *his mother*
FAIR ANNIE, *his young wife*
DONALD, *an old retainer of the Gregor family*

SCENE: *The Hall of Castle Gregor. A large open door at the back of the stage reveals a pathway edged with briar-roses leading down to the sea. The rose-bushes are bright with the tender, delicate blossoms of autumn. Beyond the rose-garden, one catches a glimpse of the water of Loch Gregor shut in by high and rocky mountains. The setting sun casts a crimson glow upon these heights and turns to gold the edges of a great cloud that hangs over the waters.*

At rise of curtain, LADY GREGOR *discovered reading. Now and then*

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she raises her head to listen impatiently to her son who is singing in the garden. Towards the end of his song she closes her book and goes to the great door.

Love Gregor [*singing outside*].

Oh, cherry, cherry is her cheek;
Her hair like summer corn;
Her lips like poppies flaming red
That summer fields adorn.

Her eyes are like a summer sea,
Of waters still and deep;
Or like the light that floods the sky
When the sun begins to peep.

Oh, how I long to see my dear!
I long to kiss my love!
With her face like the face of a sweet angel
And her heart like the heart of a dove.

Lady Gregor [*at the great door*]. All day he sings of her! No thoughts he gives to me save those of hard remembered duty and respect.

Enter DONALD *with a letter*

Donald. Another letter for my lord.

Lady G. Comes it from Castle Ryan—from the Lady Annie?

Don. It does, my lady.

Lady G. Open it! [DONALD *hesitates.*] Fear not to do my bidding. I am still mistress here at Castle Gregor. [DONALD *opens the letter.*] How writes the Lady Annie?

Don. [*reading*]. "Day after day passes and still no tidings of my belovèd one. My heart is weighed down with fears, and my eyes are weary watching for my husband's messenger. Oh, wherefore is this long, long silence? Is my lord sick? or does his lady mother linger still upon the borderland of life, holding him captive to her chamber? In my father's house the services of love are sweetly rendered both to me and to my son, yet here I cannot stay, for if my lord come not to me then I must come to him. My father, at my importunity, hath loaned to me a gallant ship and mariners to guide her through the perils of the sea. In the early coldness of to-morrow's dawn we shall set forth to seek the castle of my lord. Oh, may God bring us safely to the home of Love Gregor, the home of my dear husband—O my sweet! Annie."

Lady G. She comes to Castle Gregor —foolish girl! 'T is rash to face the perils of the autumn sea, but rasher still to face the perils of my hate.

Don. Hate, my lady? Why should your displeasure fall upon my master's bride? Report speaks well of her. They say that she is wondrous wise.

Lady G. Wisdom indeed is hers! Has she not stolen from me by her crafts the love of my dear son?

Don. Not by her crafts, my lady. It was her beauty that won my master's heart. Each day he sings the glory of her golden hair, the radiance of her blue, blue eyes.

Lady G. Are not the daughters of Evil adorned with beauty? Do they not draw men to destruction by the brightness of their eyes? Are not the souls of their lovers oft enmeshed in the nets of their shining hair?

Don. But the Lady Annie is no daughter of Evil. My master speaks ever of her goodness—he maketh songs in praise of the whiteness of her soul.

Lady G. Your master is sick with love, and when lovesickness lies upon a man he sees with a charmèd vision. Evil seems good; and things vile and

common take unto themselves the semblance of beauty. [LOVE GREGOR *sings*.] Hark! That song again! 'T is always of her he sings, always of her!

Love G. [*singing outside*].

Her voice is like a mountain brook
That sings as it speeds along;
The rapture of her happy laugh
Is like to the lilt of a song.

Lady G. Tell me, Donald, have you not heard of those that sway the human heart by favour of God's adversary?

Don. I have, my lady—and well I know the souls of noble men have oft been lost by reason of the traffickers of Evil.

Lady G. God save your master from such evil practisings.

Don. Ah, Sweet Jesus shield him, for I do love him better than anything on earth.

Lady G. The time is at hand when you may prove the worth of this your love.

Don. What means your ladyship?

Lady G. The Lady Annie comes to Castle Gregor. We must watch for her coming! We must send her away! We must shield Love Gregor from the nets of her enchantment.

Don. Think you the Lady Annie hath cast a glamour o'er my master?

Lady G. How else should he be so distraught? Doth he not walk the earth like one whose spirit is uplifted by some strange ecstasy?

Don. He doth indeed! And yet I scarce can credit such evil of his lordship's bride, for she is a lady of noble race. Her kin hath brought to Scotland both honour and renown.

Lady G. There is no race so noble but at times 't will breed both knaves and fools. Even the Lady Annie's father himself hath been suspected of communing with the Evil One.

Don. Is that so, my lady?

Lady G. 'T is said by controlment of the winds and waves, the Lord of Ryan draws the heavy-laden galleons of Spain into the perils of his rock-bound home. Night after night his men are seen wandering upon Loch Ryan's shore, casting their torches' flare upon the shallow water, and gathering up the treasures brought unto land by the enchantments of their lord.

Don. The Lord of Ryan must have great riches!

Lady G. Riches, indeed! The cellars of his castle are filled with Spanish gold and in the caves that run beneath them to the sea there is merchandise of untold worth.

Don. May God have mercy on this Lord of Ryan, for wealth won wrongly weighs the soul to earth so that it may not wing its way to Heaven.

Lady G. Pray rather for the souls of those that stand in peril of his wicked spells. Ask the good God to shield your master from the enchantments of his daughter—the wise and beautiful Lady Annie.

Don. Is it for my master's salvation that you would turn away the Lady Annie from our door?

Lady G. 'T is for the health of his soul. Was it not to save him from the Lady Annie's evil charms that I drew him to Castle Gregor by a feigned sickness? That I waylaid the messengers that would have passed betwixt him and this enchantress!—that I sought to sow within his mind the seeds of distrust? Oh, Donald,

give me your aid this night and we will draw apart these love-entangled souls, for should my son not see Fair Annie for awhile her image must fade a little from his mind. Then might he turn to me—to me, the mother, waiting at his side—and know at last the richness of that love that I do bear for him.

Love G. [*singing outside*].

Oh, how I long to see my dear!
I long to kiss my love!
With her face like the face of a sweet angel
And her heart like the heart of a dove!

Don. My master is coming in from the garden.

Lady G. Give me Fair Annie's letter; I will hide it within the leaves of God's Book.

She hides the letter.

Enter LOVE GREGOR *from the garden*

Lady G. You are early in to-night.

Love G. The shadows fall upon the garden and night comes before its time. I fear there will be rain ere long. Look how the glory of the sun's farewell is dimmed by the gathering of clouds! The far-off hills, so darkly outlined 'gainst the evening sky, seem almost at hand.

Don. There will come a storm with the falling of the night.

Love G. [*to* DONALD]. Has no letter arrived from the Lady Annie?

Don. [*hesitatingly*]. None—my lord—that I know of—

Love G. 'T is strange! I cannot understand this long, long silence. Tell the porter at the gate to keep his watch throughout the night. If any messenger should come from Castle Ryan he must bring me word at once.

Don. I will tell him, my lord.

[*Exit* DONALD

Lady G. Why do you fret the house with this perpetual watching?

Love G. My mind is troubled with surmise. I fear my wife is sick! I fear some evil hath fallen on our little one! Oh, for one message of love! A few short words to bring back peace into my life!

Lady G. Sweep all these idle fancies from your mind. Your wife is but a child. How could her thoughts dwell with her absent lord amid the revelry of Castle Ryan?

Love G. What mean you, my lady mother?

Lady G. Have you not told me of that brightly-coloured round of pleasure that makes perpetual movement at Fair Annie's home? The cries of the tourney and the chase that fill its policies each day with joyful sounds. Are not the lighted windows of Great Ryan's keep seen twinkling every night—like a hundred merry eyes—by mariners far out at sea?—while snatches of gay music float across the moving waters and cheer the hearts of those who keep their watches on the passing ships? Fair Annie is young—the mind of Youth turns easily to the pleasures of the hour.

Love G. But not the mind of Annie, for though she has a merry heart, and dearly loves to sing and dance, she never was a slave to pleasure.

Lady G. You speak as though Fair Annie were the paragon of wives.

Love G. And so she is! I do believe she is fairest flower that God has ever sent to adorn His earthly garden!

Lady G. In the early days of marriage all men think their wives uncommon, but 't is a foolish thought!

Love G. Oh, mother, mother! Why do you search your mind to find some flaw in Annie's love for me? Why has your speech become of late so harsh and cruel?

Lady G. Never have I been harsh to you, Love Gregor.

Love G. Perchance not to me, but better could I bear a harshness to myself than to the woman that I love. If you cannot speak of Annie with more gentleness—then speak of her not at all.

Lady G. Nay, be not angry, Love Gregor. It is your mother's love that sometimes makes her speak thus bitterly.

Love G. Strange is the love that hath such power to wound. Your words are like daggers, each one stabbing my heart.

Lady G. Forgive me, Lord Gregor. Oh, my son, you know not the love-hunger that gnaws at the heart of a mother—a mother who has waited at Love's feast and through the long and weary years has been passed by. You must forgive, Love Gregor.

Enter DONALD *hurriedly*

Don. My lady! My lady!

He sees LOVE GREGOR *and hesitates.*

Love G. Have you any news?

Don. Nay, nay, nothing, my lord!

Love G. Why, then, this haste?

Don. I have a message for my lady, but 't is nothing—nothing of importance.

Lady G. Go to your couch, my son, this watching hath made you restless. Shut fast the great door, Donald.

Love G. Nay! Let me enjoy the last sweet mysteries of the falling night. The shadows in the garden grow dark and darker. A watery mist gives to the distant hills the soft grey beauty of the peaks of fairyland.

Lady G. Shut the door, my son! The wind blows cold.

Love G. 'T is cold indeed! Look how it hath scattered the rose-leaves o'er the moss-edged flags, decking the pathway with their fragrant beauty, as though to greet the coming of a bride.

Lady G. Shut the door, my son! Shut the door! The clammy mists of night creep into the house and chill me to the bone.

Love G. Make fast the door, Donald. Good-night, my lady mother. I shall but rest upon my couch, lest some messenger should come from Castle Ryan.

He kisses her.

Lady G. Good-night, dear son. Kiss me again, nay, not so coldly. That's better, good-night. May sleep bring calm unto your troubled mind.

[*Exit* LOVE GREGOR

Don. I am glad that my master has gone, for I have news, my lady.

Lady G. News? Is it of the Lady Annie?

Don. It is, my lady.

Lady G. Is there word of her coming?

Don. Her ship is even now sailing down the Loch.

Lady G. Have you seen it?

Don. Not I, my lady, but the Porter at the gate hath watched it for an hour or so.

Lady G. How knew he 't was the Lady Annie's ship?

Don. By its ebon hull and its red brown sails; by the green coats of its mariners; and by the great black swan that with its ruffled wings and proudly-archèd neck, bends o'er the prow as though to hiss defiance to the waves.

Lady G. Such are the ships of the Lords of Ryan. To what direction does the vessel shape its course?

Don. It comes to Castle Gregor! Upon the deck there stands a lady tall and fair—her eyes are set upon our lofty towers, and ever with her hand she seems to urge the mariners to speed their boat towards our Castle's steps.

Lady G. Close fast the shutters lest our light should prove a beacon unto them. [DONALD *closes the shutters.*] We must be watchful, Donald —we must be wise.

Don. Fear falls upon my heart.

Lady G. This is no time for fear. The safety of your master's soul depends this night on you. If that your love for him hath any worth, now must you prove it and save him from an everlasting death.

Don. I love my master better than I love myself, and therefore do I cast away my fears.

Lady G. Now you are yourself.

Don. You may trust me, my lady, for if it be within the power of man, I will save my dear lord.

Lady G. Bolt fast the door, put up the chains, and turn the key! Never shall Fair Annie's shadow fall upon our Castle's floor—never shall her footsteps cross the threshold of our home.

Don. The door is fast. How the wind begins to wail!

Lady G. The storm has come at last.

Don. The song of the wind is a sad song—

Lady G. Wake up, Donald! Wake up! This is no time for fireside sadness! Wake up!

Don. What should we do, my lady?

Lady G. Time and occasion must direct our way; only we must be ready—for the hour of action is at hand. Hark! Was not that the lilt of a song.

Don. It was, my lady.

Lady G. It came from the sea—borne fitfully upon the unequal wind.

Don. It must have been the song of mariners.

Lady G. Go to your master's room; if he be asleep, close fast his door, lest this singing should awaken him.

[*Exit* DONALD

LADY GREGOR *listens at the great door —the lilt of the song grows clearer. The song of the* MARINERS *is heard outside.*

Mariners [*outside.*]

Speed on! Speed on! My bonny boat!
Speed on towards the land!
For yonder behold Lord Gregor's towers
Close to the salt sea-strand.

During the song reënter DONALD

Don. My master is asleep.

Lady G. That 's well. Go to the unlighted window of the passage, and when the ship hath come to land, bring me word.

[*Exit* DONALD

LADY GREGOR *puts out the candle so that the stage is lighted only by the glow of the fire.*

Mar. [*outside*].

Make fast, make fast your bonny boat
Beneath the Castle's wall!
Lord Gregor soon shall meet his bride
Within his stately hall.

Enter DONALD

Don. The ship hath come to land. I saw the Lady Annie passing through the water-gate. She bore her young son in her arms, and the heavy splendour of her hair was blown about her by the fitful wind as though it were a cloak of gold. Even now she must be climbing up the rugged steepness of our garden path.

Lady G. Hark! I hear a footfall on the mossy steps. Go to the door!

Don. I am afraid, my lady—afraid!

Lady G. Do as I bid you! Go to the door! [DONALD *moves fearfully to the great door.*] If she should knock, demanding entrance, you must command her in her master's voice to return unto her ship.

Don. I would not dare, my lady.

Lady G. Think of the peril of your master's soul, and know that this night's work depends on you.

FAIR ANNIE *knocks upon the door.*

Don. What shall I do, my lady?

Lady G. Send her away! Bid her return unto the sea.

There is more knocking.

Don. Who knocks upon the door?

Annie.

'T is I, Fair Annie, of Loch Ryan!
'T is I, your young girl-wife!
I have come across the stormy sea
To seek the Love o' my life.

[*After a slight pause, she knocks again.*]

Oh, open the door, Love Gregor, I pray;
Oh, open and let me in,
For the wind blows through my yellow hair
And the rain drops o'er my chin.

Don. May I not open the door, my lady? May I not open the door?

Lady G. Nay, send her away? Away to the sea! Bid her return to her boat.

Knocking.

Don.

Away! Away! you wile warlock!
Away, you daughter of sin!
As Mary Mother is mine aid,
You shall not enter in.

Annie.

I am neither a witch nor a wile warlock!
Nor mermaid of the sea;
I am Fair Annie of Loch Ryan!
Oh, open the door to me!

Don. What shall I do, my lady! Oh, tell me, what shall I do?

Lady G. Send her away—away to the sea—bid her return to her ship.

FAIR ANNIE *knocks.*

Don.

You shall not sit at my castle's board,
I swear it by Jesus' Sire.
And as He reigns in the Heavens above
You shall not rest by my fire.

Annie.

Oh, open the door now, Love Gregor,
Open the door, I pray,
Or your young son that is in mine arms
Will be dead ere it be day.

LADY GREGOR *crosses to the great door. She speaks as though overwhelmed by hatred and rage.*

Lady G.

Away! Away! you ill woman,
For here you shall not win in.
Go drown yourself in the raging sea,
Or hang from the gallows grim.

[*There is a sound as of a woman sobbing.* LADY GREGOR *listens at the door.*]

She is going away, away to the sea.
She returns once more to her boat!
I can hear her trip o'er the mossy stones;
The rose-briars tear at her gown.
I can hear her moan a hush-a-bye
To soothe her greeting son.

LADY GREGOR *and* DONALD *listen for a few moments.*

Don. I hear her no more—there is no sound of her. Naught can I hear but the wailing of the wind and the waves.

Lady G. She has gone! Fair Annie has gone—gone down to the sea! Oh, may the cloak of night hide her from Love Gregor's eyes, for he must not know of this coming of his bride.

There is the sound of a door opening.

Don. Listen! Did you not hear my master's door?

Lady G. Perhaps Love Gregor has awakened.

Don. I hear him coming, my lady. He walks like a man that trembles with fear!

Enter LOVE GREGOR

Love G. Did you not hear a knocking on the door? Did you not hear a cry in the wind outside?

Lady G. We have heard nothing—nothing but the wailing of the wind and the waves Go back again to your couch, my son. You look sick and weary. Return again to your rest.

Love G. I dare not sleep again, for sleep to-night is full of terrors.

Lady G. What terrors, my son?

Love G. I dreamt a dream of Fair Annie—a dream that shook me to the soul.

Lady G. What was your dream, my son?

Love G. I dreamt Fair Annie came to seek me here at Castle Gregor, but she found me not. I dreamt that she knocked upon our door, but it was not opened to her; that she called upon my name and I heard her not. Then at the peep o' day I rose from my couch, and when I opened the great door, Fair Annie lay upon our threshold—dead—clothed in the shroud of her golden hair, and with a silver dagger thrust in her heart.

Lady G. What dagger was that, my son?

Love G. 'T was the dagger you wore at your side, my mother.

Lady G. Such dreams are the sickness of love, dear son. Sweep them away from your brain! Think no more upon them.

Love G. That were impossible, my lady mother, for the dream I dreamt was no common dream. Perchance it was sent as a warning of Evil to come. How dark is this hall! Light the candles once more.

DONALD *lights the candles.*

Lady G. What will you do, my son?

Love G. I will set out at once to Fair Annie's home, for there shall I learn the truth.

Lady G. Be not so hasty, my son. These fears are born of your dreaming. To-morrow they all will be gone. Stay with your mother at Castle Gregor—stay with her but a while, and by her love and her tenderness she will banish these fears from your mind.

Love G. Nay, Nay—I must go to Fair Annie— I must go to her this very night. Donald, bid my mariners to prepare my gallant ship. As soon

as the storm has past I shall set forth to the home of my bride.

[*Exit* DONALD

Lady G. But would you leave me here alone, my son?

Love G. There are many faithful servants at Castle Gregor; they will watch over you till I return.

Lady G. Stay with me but a day or two.

Love G. Nay, I must set forth this night. I cannot rest till I have learnt the truth of Annie's silence—till I have torn away the veil of mystery which time hath drawn betweeen us.

Lady G. Stay, stay, my son! Have you no love thoughts for the woman who gave to you the precious gift of life?

Love G. Why do you ask me that? Surely I have rendered to the full the services of filial duty?

Lady G. True, true, my son, but the services of duty are not all that I would win. Are your love-thoughts given wholly to Fair Annie?

Love G. The best of my thoughts are hers, as the best of her thoughts are mine.

Lady G. What are the best of a maiden's thoughts? O foolish son, to treasure thus the affections of a young and untried girl! After life's struggle hath given strength unto a woman's will; after life's sorrow hath touched her heart to tenderness, then may she know the great, the abiding love. The love of a young girl is but a selfish and a shallow thing—oft born of a smile and drowned in a tear.

Love G. Set a watch over your tongue, good mother, lest you should speak things unforgivable.

Lady G. 'T is not at your command that I will guard my speech, Love Gregor. Must I stand aside and watch Fair Annie cast her net of enchantment about your soul? Must I be silent and see your manhood overwhelmed by a false and fleeting love?

Love G. A false and fleeting love! Such words are madness. A truer love ne'er bound two human hearts together—it is a love that hath given vision to our eyes and wings to our souls.

Lady G. Fine phrases often hide the grossness of a common lust.

Love G. Say no more, my mother —say no more! These words of yours have banished me for aye from Castle Gregor. When I set forth to-night, I go never to return.

Lady G. Nay, nay, my son, you must not leave me here alone. Forget my hasty words.

Love G. Such words cannot be forgotten.

Lady G. But promise that you will return! Think! Think, my son! You are all I have to love—all that remains to me of life. Oh! say you will come back again. I could not face the autumn of my life if you were absent from my side. Oh, say you will come back again!

Love G. If you will promise ne'er to speak unkindly of my wife—ne'er to hold up our love to scorn, then will I come again.

Lady G. That is a hard thing to promise.

Love G. If you cannot pledge your word to this, then we, to-night, must part for ever.

Lady G. My son, my son, I cannot let you pass out of my life.

Love G. Then you promise?

Lady G. Yes—I promise.

[*Exit* LADY GREGOR, *trying to hide her humiliation*

Love G. How wild and confused are the cries of the wind! Surely the hounds of Heaven are hunting tonight some precious quarry. The horrors of my dream so hang about my mind that I dare not return to my rest. I will sit by the fire and read for a while. Here is my mother's book—God's Holy Word. 'T is said that if a man in trouble open suddenly God's Book there will he find sweet words to comfort him. [*He opens the book and discovers Annie's letter.*] Why, what is this? A letter! And written in Fair Annie's hand! How came it here betwixt the pages of my mother's book? [*Reads the letter.*] What words are these? My Annie is coming to see me here; she is coming to Castle Gregor! Why—why should these precious words have been hidden from mine eyes? I cannot understand.

Enter DONALD

Don. Is not her ladyship here?

Love G. My lady mother hath gone unto her room. [DONALD *crosses to door right.*] Stay, Donald! I would speak with you. When I came from the garden to-night, was not my lady mother reading God's Book?

Don. She was, my lord. It is her custom to seek the comfort of its words each night before she goes unto her rest.

Love G. After I had come into the hall, did I not ask if a letter had arrived from Castle Ryan?

Don. You did, my lord.

Love G. And you answered "No"?

Don. I—I answered—"No!"

Love G. Was that the truth, Donald? Look into mine eyes, Donald! Was that the truth?

Don. It was not, my lord.

Love G. You told me a lie?

Don. Yes, my lord. I told you a lie, but you must forgive me, my lord. It was to save your soul from everlasting death that I spoke falsely—it was to shield you, my dear master, from the spells of a wicked woman.

Love G. Was it my mother that spoke to you of these spells?

Don. It was, my lord. Your mother loves you well, my lord!

Love G. Was it love that made her feed her son with lies when the truth meant so much happiness to him? Was it love that made her seek to part Love Gregor from his bride? Oh, well—right well, hath she played her part and I must ever scorn myself to have been so easily deceived. What must I do when Fair Annie comes?

Don. Think you she will return, my lord?

Love G. Return?

Don. She went a while since down unto the sea. Ere this she will have entered once more into her boat.

Love G. Have entered once more into her boat? Nay, answer me not, for now the truth breaks in upon my mind. That knocking I heard was no false sound of slumber; that cry was not uttered by a phantom of dreamland—'t was the knocking of Fair Annie—'t was the cry of my wife. [*Sounds of distress are heard outside.*] Open the door, Donald—open the door—nay, quickly, quickly! [DONALD *opens the door.*] What do you see?

Don. There is a flickering of torches amid the pine-trees. Great shadowy figures are hurrying down to the beach.

Love G. Why are their voices so troubled?

Don. I cannot tell, my lord, unless some mischance hath come unto the Lady Annie's boat.

Love G. Dear God, forbid! Let me pass, Donald, let me pass, I am coming to you, dear Annie. Surely my heart hath wings to speed me to your side.

[*He rushes out. As his voice dies away,* DONALD *hurries to the door right*

Don. [*calling*]. My lady! My lady!

Enter LADY GREGOR

Lady G. What is the matter—where is Love Gregor?

Don. He hath gone down to the shore—he hath gone to seek the Lady Annie.

Lady G. Then he knows that his bride has been here to-night?

Don. My master knows all.

Lady G. Think you he will call her back unto the land?

Don. I fear that is impossible—I fear that some mischance hath fallen on her ship.

Lady G. Nay, say not that. If any harm should come unto the Lady Annie, Love Gregor never would forgive me. Look out, Donald—what do you see?

Don. The torch-bearers are casting the flare of their lights upon the sea-wrack that fringes our bay. They are seeking for something.

Lady G. Why do their voices mingle in such confusion? They are silent now—so hushed they might be gazing on some sight that robs them of their speech. They speak again—the rush of their words becomes more and more rapid. My blood is chilled with fear. I scarcely dare to think on what hath happed.

Song of the TORCH-BEARERS *heard outside.*

Torch-Bearers.

> Oh, cherry, cherry is her cheek,
> And golden is her hair,
> But clay-cold are her rosy lips
> No breath of life stirs there.

Don. Did you hear the words of the torch-bearers?

Lady G. I heard them well. Think you that Lady Annie is drowned?

Don. Such is the burden of their song.

Lady G. Oh, what is this calamity that hath come so near our door! If Fair Annie be drowned, never will Love Gregor forgive me—never!

Don. They are bringing her up through the water-gate.

Lady G. Hath her face the paleness of death?

Don. I only can see her golden hair, that glints in the torches' light. 'T is dank and wet and clings round her like a Sea-Queen's robe.

Lady G. They must not bring her here, Donald. Shut the door! I dare not look upon her now! Shut the door! Shut the door!

Don. Be calm, my lady, be calm. They have set her down on the terrace, and now that the rain hath ceased I can see the shape of her elfin face. Surely no mortal maid had beauty like to hers.

Lady G. Is Love Gregor beside her?

Don. He stands gazing with tearless eyes upon her fair young face.

Lady G. Tell him that I would speak with him.

Don. They take up the body again, they bear it towards my master's ship.

Lady G. He will not go hence without saying farewell! Tell him that I must speak with him. [*Exit* DONALD.] Why do I fear to meet Love Gregor face to face? Doth my hate of Fair Annie now die at the thought of its own deed? Nay; I must keep it alive; I must hate her still if I would have the strength to look into Love Gregor's eyes.

Song of the TORCH-BEARERS *outside.*

Torch-Bearers.

Oh, first he kissed her cherry cheek,
And next he kissed her chin,
Then softly pressed her rosy lips,
But there was no breath within.

At the end of the song enter LOVE GREGOR *slowly*

Lady G. Are you going away, my son?

Love G. Yes, my lady mother, I am going away. The storm is passing and the mariners make ready my ship.

Lady G. Whither would you go, my son?

Love G. To Castle Ryan, to bear Fair Annie to her home—to set her in that field of sleep where rest the noble fathers of her race.

Lady G. You will return, my son.

Love G. No, no, my lady mother. This deed of yours hath set a sea of injury betwixt us that only time can bridge.

Lady G. You must forgive, my son. I never meant to kill your bride—I never meant to kill her, Love Gregor. Hatred and jealousy made blind mine eyes.

Love G. You drove her from our Castle-door, and she had come so far to seek for me.

Lady G. Judge not too harshly, my son. When time hath shown to you the mysteries of a woman's heart, then will you understand that bitterness that falls upon neglected motherhood. Listen, Love Gregor. When you were a child you lived in a world of dreams. You walked and talked each day with creatures born of your own imagination. You did not know the living people that moved around you, the people who loved and tended you. All through the weary years I waited, thinking that one day you would come out of your world of dreams and, beholding the mother standing at your side, give to her a little of your love, a little of your gratitude.

Love G. Why have you not spoken to me of this before?

Lady G. Often have I tried, but your father's neglect had bred in me a cold and stubborn pride. To him, women were but love-toys—to be enjoyed in an idle hour, when men were weary of the fight and of the chase. Promise me, my son, you will come back.

Love G. I may not return until my work be done.

Lady G. Cannot that work be done at Castle Gregor, where love and tenderness shall make of every task a pleasure? Listen, my son, here shall you weave throughout the day your garlands of song, and at the falling of the night the minstrel shall bring his harp into the hall and, by his muse's

magic charm, give to your words a double splendour.

Love G. Nay, nay, my lady mother. I may not stay. Fair Annie's love is calling me away, away into the world of men.

Lady G. Annie is dead! How can her love now come between us?

Love G. Annie is dead, and dead is the lesser part of our great love. Gone for ever is the love of kisses, tender words and fond embraces, but the greater love still lives and 't is that love that now is calling me unto the world, that I may show its glory unto men and by its aid conquer in the battle of my soul.

Lady G. But, when the battle hath been won, will you not then return?

Love G. Time will direct my steps.

Lady G. Time will also soften the harsh memories of this night. I know you will return, my son, and when you come again unto your home you will find your mother waiting for you. Good-bye, my son.

Love G. Good-bye, my lady mother.

Lady G. Kiss me just once before you go. Look how the recovered moon hath set your vessel in a blaze of light! Is not this a happy augury?

The song of the TORCH-BEARERS *outside.*

Torch-Bearers.

Her shroud a shroud of golden hair,
Sweet roses on her breast,
And the silver moon to shed her light
Over her dreamless rest.

Lady G. Good-bye, dear son—your mother will be waiting for you—waiting to welcome you home!

CURTAIN.

DUST OF THE ROAD

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

KENNETH SAWYER GOODMAN

CHARACTERS

PETER STEELE
PRUDENCE STEELE, *his wife*
AN OLD MAN, *Prudence's uncle*
A TRAMP

The time is about one o'clock of a Christmas morning in the early seventies. The place is the living room of a comfortable and fairly prosperous Middle Western farmer. At the right as you face the stage is a fireplace with a glowing fire in it. Beside the fire is a large arm-chair in which PRUDENCE *is sitting. At her elbow is a small table with a lighted lamp, having an opaque shade of green tin. At the left is a door giving into other parts of the house; at the back centre a door giving outside. There is a larger table at left centre near the front of the stage. There is also a lighted lamp on this table, but the back of the stage is in semi-darkness. Near the outside door is a window, the curtains of which are drawn. As the curtain rises, the* OLD MAN *has just shut and bolted the outside door as if shutting some one out. He is only partly dressed and carries a lighted candle in his hand.*

Prudence. Well, what did he say?

Old Man. Nothing. He's gone, if that's any comfort to you.

Pru. It is a comfort to me. I don't like folks coming to the door at this time of night.

Old Man. You might have stirred yourself to take a look at him. He was that cold I could hear his teeth clatter.

Pru. What was he like?

Old Man. Youngish, I'd say, with thin cheeks and a yellow beard. But I never see such old looking eyes as he had.

Pru. Go to bed, Uncle.

Old Man. Both his hands were bandaged. I could see the blood on 'em.

Pru. Well, what of it? We can't be feeding every beggar that comes to the house.

Old Man [*at the window*]. He ain't turned the willows at the bend of the road. I could holler to him yet.

Pru. Go back to bed, I tell you, and let me read my Bible till Peter comes in.

Old Man [*going toward the inside door*]. You've set me thinking, Prudence Steele. You've set me thinking again.

Pru. Hush your mouth, and go to bed.

Old Man. Aye, aye, that's it! 'To them that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.' If folks only knows enough to keep their mouths shut.

Pru. Now, you're blaspheming again.

Old Man. Maybe I be. But if I was to open my mouth now and tell what I can remember clear as day, wouldn't I be serving the Lord? Answer me that.

Pru. Nobody 'd believe you.

Old Man. I ain't asking 'em to. If you and Peter can disremember what happened in this room, it ain't for me to turn against my own kin.

Pru. Nothing happened in this room.

Old Man. Maybe I never seen thirty one-hundred dollar bills counted out on this table.

Pru. Go to bed.

Old Man. I'm going—I'm going, but it would do me good to see them that's proud pulled down and her that wouldn't spare a crust for a lame beggar on Christmas Eve, losing a piece of money like that as a judgment. It would be as fine a judgment as ever I see in that there book of yours.

[*The* OLD MAN *goes out chuckling* PRUDENCE *follows him to the door, closes it, listens a moment, then blows out the lamp on the larger table and returns to the chair by the fire. She turns the pages of the book and then lays it face down on her knee and puts her hand over her eyes. The whole stage is now nearly dark, the only light coming from the lamp on the small table and from the fire in the grate. The* TRAMP *opens the outside door and steps into the room.* PRUDENCE *stirs a little and the book drops from her lap, rousing her. She sits up and listens. The* TRAMP *closes the door and shoots the bolt.*

Pru. You're powerful late getting in.

Tramp. Aye, maybe I am.

He rattles the door to see if it is fast.

Pru. Hush your noise with the bolt, can't you! You'll be having Uncle down here again.

Tramp. I'll take my chance of that!

Pru. What's the matter with your voice?

Tramp. It's the river fog sticking in my throat.

Pru. [*rising*]. Come here and let me look at you. I never heard you speak with that voice before.

Tramp [*stepping into the light*]. I dare say you never did!

Pru. God save us! I thought you were my husband.

Tramp. I gathered as much from your friendly greeting.

He comes a step nearer.

Pru. Stand off or I'll scream! What do you want? Who are you?

Tramp. What's the need of your knowing?

Pru. Tell me what you want and get out of my house. You needn't grin at me. I'm not afraid of you!

Tramp. You're a bold woman!

Pru. I have cause to be, with a husband leaving me lonesome half the nights of the year, and beggars prowling the dark like rats.

Tramp. You've a brave tongue in your head, and a kind voice, like a chilly wind on a tin church steeple. You'll ask me to sit by your fire next and offer me a sup of something hot.

Pru. I'll point you the door you came in by, and set the dog to your coat-tails.

Tramp. Fine hospitality for the beginning of Christmas Day.

Pru. Who are you?

Tramp. Dust of the road, my dear, like any other man. Dust with a spark of fire in it.

Pru. You're a tramp, by the looks of you—or worse.

Tramp. A tramp is it? That's what you'd call a gay fellow tramping the hills for the clean joy of sun and air; keen snow in winter and the voice of the birds in the warm season. It's what you'd call the lifeless wretches, skulking from doorstep to doorstep for the leavings of other folk's tables. I'm neither the one sort nor the other, but the name fits me well enough.

Pru. Whatever you call yourself, you've got no business in a decent person's house at the middle of the night.

Tramp [*taking a pipe from his pocket and filling it*] Is your husband like to be home soon?

Pru. You'll hear him at the door any minute now. If you're thinking of robbery you'd better be quick about it. There's little enough to take.

Tramp [*lighting his pipe and seating himself on the edge of the larger table*]. You can keep your hand off that trinket at your neck and make your mind easy about the spoons. I'm a disreputable character, a prowler in the night, a betrayer of friendship; I've none of what you'd call common decency; I'd as leave eat your bread and kiss your hand and do you a dirty turn afterward as not, but—well—I've a different whim. I'm not here to make you trouble.

Pru. Fine ideas you've got! What'll my husband say when he smells the smoke of your pipe?

Tramp. You'll have no call to lie, my dear, though you've a quick enough wit! I'm waiting to see him myself when he comes in.

Pru. Like as not he'll break your head for your pains.

Tramp. Aye, like as not.

Pru. You've got gall to be sitting there swinging your feet.

Tramp. I'm thinking what I'll say to you in the meantime.

Pru. You won't be doing much thinking when he's pounded you till the teeth ache in your jaws.

Tramp [*in a cold sharp voice and speaking very slowly*]. Why did you send that other beggar away just now, Prudence Steele?

Pru. So you know my name, do you?

Tramp. Yes! It's a cruel sounding name, Prudence Steele, and you've a cruel way of speaking and of looking at a poor man, my dear!

Pru. You're a fine hand at a compliment, Mister Tramp.

Tramp. Why did you send him away?

Pru. Send who away?

Tramp. The lame man with the bandages on his hands and feet.

Pru. What's that to you?

Tramp. I was standing in the road. I saw him knock at your door. I saw it open a little. I saw it close again. I saw him go away—just as I've seen him go from thousands of other doors.

Pru. He must be a friend of yours.

Tramp. No. He was one once. Now he's a creditor.

Pru. By the looks of it, he'll have a hard time getting his money.

Tramp. Money's easy to find,—sometimes too easy. Now if you'd care to feel in my pockets—[*He jingles coins in his pockets.*]

Pru. Well, pay him then, and keep him from pestering other folks.

Tramp. One isn't always minded to pay one's debts. And sometimes it's not so easy as you'd think. Only one day of the year I walk the same road with him. I follow him with the money in my hand. I met him at your gate just now and offered it. He turned aside his face. Would you like to see the coins? [*Holding out his hand with coins.*] You must. Thirty pieces of silver coined in the Roman mint at Jerusalem.

Faint blue light now illumines the face of the TRAMP *and becomes brighter as the scene goes on.*

Pru. [*fascinated, looking at the money*]. You frighten me. What are those stains?

Tramp. Blood, my dear! It's blood money.

Pru. Whose blood?

Tramp. The man's who knocked at your door.

Pru. What did he want?

Tramp. He came to give—not to ask.

Pru. What beggar would be going about the country giving something away?

Tramp. Yes, Prudence Steele, what beggar would be doing that? It's a riddle for you to read.

Pru. And I suppose now, you've got something to give me!

Tramp. Yes, something you won't be likely to take.

Pru. Huh! Advice, I suppose. That's the cheapest thing I know.

Tramp. Sit down. [PRUDENCE *sits down.*] Where the man with the wounded hands knocks once, he knocks again. Wherever he's turned away, I find the door unlatched. But open the door to him, and I stand in

the road outside,—I'm glad! Oh, I'm a person of strange contradictions—like any other man. You don't understand me.

Pru. No.

Tramp. No matter. When he knocks again, let him come in.

Pru. What do you mean?

Tramp. Let him come in, I tell you, and save the joy of life in your heart.

There is a stamping outside and the door is shaken.

Peter [*outside*]. Hi! Open the door! Prudence, I say! Wake up and open the door!

Pru. [*starting and passing her hands across her eyes*]. It's Peter. It's my husband.

Tramp. Open the door for him!

PRUDENCE *runs to the door and opens it.* PETER *enters and she clings to him, half hysterical. The* TRAMP *remains seated on the larger table, but the light fades from his face*

Pru. Peter—oh, Peter, Peter!

Pet. What's biting you? Let go my arm, woman! Are you trying to claw the coat off me?

Pru. Send him away! Send him away! Send him away!

Pet. Take your hands off me.

Pru. Send him away!

Pet. Send who away?

Pru. That man! That man over there! I'm afraid of him!

Pet. What man?

Pru. He came in without knocking. I thought it was you! He's terrible—he's crazy! Look at his eyes! Send him away!

Pet. Go on! Don't be a fool! There's nobody here.

Pru. Over there! He was standing by the table. The table over there . . . He's gone!

They both move across the room, but the TRAMP *has disappeared in the darkness.*

Pet. You've been asleep! You've had a nightmare. You've been worrying again. You'd no call to sit up waiting for me. There's been nobody here.

Pru. I could have taken my solemn oath! . . .

Pet. [*roughly*]. You'll take no oaths except them I tell you to. Go to bed!

Pru. Where've you been?

Pet. Up to the church. I stayed to a vestry meeting. I walked home slow.

Pru. You've decided what we're going to do?

Pet. Go to bed and let me think. I'll tell you in the morning.

PRUDENCE *moves toward the inside door.* PETER *calls her back.*

Pet. Look here! You'll keep your mouth shut? You'll stick to that?

Pru. Yes.

She makes a move as if she were coming back to say something.

Pet. Get out of here and let me alone.

He sits down in the chair by the fire and puts his face in his hands. PRUDENCE *goes out. The* TRAMP *reappears.*

Tramp. Well, Peter Steele, is it easy to think of perjury and theft on Christmas morning?

Pet. God! Who's talking to me!

Tramp. A greater rogue than yourself.

Pet. [*rising*]. I see you now, confound you! Where were you hiding when I came in?

Tramp. No matter!

Pet. So, my wife wasn't dreaming, eh!

Tramp. No more than you are.

Pet. You frightened her, eh! I'll make short work of you.

He begins rolling up his sleeves.

Tramp. I only gave her a little advice.

Pet. Damn you! I'll give you something else!

He moves toward the TRAMP.

Tramp [*coolly*]. Sit down!

Pet. Get out of here, with your advice! Get out, I tell you, before I kick you out.

Tramp [*more harshly but without moving*]. Sit down.

Pet. You can't frighten me with your talk. I'm an honest man, I tell you.

Tramp. So was I once.

Pet. What have you got to do with me, damn you?

Tramp. 'For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known.'

Pet. [*with a sigh of relief*]. Oh, I see now. You're only a travelling preacher.

Tramp. No, but I've travelled much and worn the cloth in my time.

Pet. I'm dashed if I see what you're driving at!

Tramp. You will presently.

Pet. I won't listen to you.

Tramp. You know what's coming.

Pet. How should I know what's coming? I'll—I'll—

Tramp. You'll listen, Peter Steele, because I'm going to tell you something about yourself and you'll know it for the truth.

Pet. If—if some one sent you here to pump me, you'd better be off, or I'll have the law on you both.

Tramp. You had a friend, Peter Steele, and you loved him. He'd often left his affairs in your hands. You'd served him honestly and he trusted you.

Pet. And why wouldn't anybody trust me? I've been an honest man, I tell you.

Tramp. He came to you in this room. It was the spring the war began. He had enlisted a company. Before he left he brought you money, money to keep for his boy.

Pet. It's a lie! I tell you, it's a damned lie! What right's the boy got to think his father gave me money to keep for him? He ain't got a receipt, has he? It ain't shown in the accounts, is it?

Tramp. No, Peter Steele, the boy can't show a receipt and the entry's not to be found in the accounts.

Pet. By what token do you think a man would be fool enough to leave money lying around loose like that?

Tramp. By the token that he trusted you.

Pet. I never had it! I tell you I never had it! What do you know about it?

Tramp. The drums were beating in the road. Your friend was in his captain's uniform. His sword lay on the table by the door; his cloak over the back of that chair. You sat here. He stood across the table from you. Your wife sat where you're sitting now; her uncle over there by the window.

Pet. Who told you all that? What tricks are you trying to play on me?

Tramp. Your friend laid the money on this table; thirty one-hundred dollar bills. He said to you, "Peter, I want to leave this money with you. In case I don't come back, I'd rather my boy didn't count on anything at all when he makes his start. I've fixed things safe for him till he can earn his keep. This is something extra, a nest egg for him, when he's twenty-one." Then he shook you by the hand. As he went down the path, the drums stopped beating, and when the room was still again you heard the voice of the money!

Pet. God, how did you know that?

Tramp. Oh, you meant to keep faith, Peter Steele, but you never entered the three thousand dollars in your accounts. Well, he never came back. You read his name in the lists. It set you thinking about the boy and the money. Years went by. The boy began to work and earn his keep. You watched him grow up and wondered if he guessed. Last week, you remembered that your debt fell due on the day after Christmas. Then you sat down to figure interest. You'd used the money well and you tried a just rate. The total startled you. Then you tried three per cent; still too much! Then you sat quiet and the money whispered to you. "Why give me up at all? No one can prove you ever had me."

Pet. And they can't prove it! My wife and her uncle can swear they never saw it paid.

Tramp. Certainly.

Pet. The boy can't show a receipt.

Tramp. None!

Pet. No. I don't know who told you all this, but if you're trying to blackmail me, there's the door, and be damned!

Tramp. I'll not trouble you again, whatever decision you come to.

Pet. Then, what in hell did you come here for? Answer me that!

Tramp. To advise you to give the boy his money of your own free will.

Pet. Ha! Ha! Anything else?

Tramp. No.

Pet. Who in the devil are you, stranger?

Tramp. Come closer!

Pet. I can see you well enough from here.

Tramp. Come here and look at me. Have you ever seen me before?

Pet. No, thank Heaven! I never have.

Tramp. Look in my eyes.

PETER *moves toward him as if dazed.*

Pet. They're like the eyes of a cat. There's fire in 'em!

Tramp. Flame from a sunset under Calvary. Look at my throat!

Pet. [*shrinking away*]. I've seen marks like that on a man. . . .

Tramp. I hanged myself to a dead tree on a stony hillside. Listen!

He jingles the money in his pocket.

Pet. It's the sound of money!

Tramp. Thirty pieces of silver, coined in the Roman mint at Jerusalem; the price of my soul, that's walked the evil edges of the world, for nineteen centuries.

Pet. In God's name, tell me who you are!

Tramp. The one being that knows best the priceless value of the thing you're so ready to sell,—Judas of Kerioth.

He advances toward PETER, *who sinks into the chair by the fire, cowering away from him.*

Pet. Let me alone, I say! Let me alone!

Tramp. You'd been an honest man, Peter Steele, and the sun had warmed you and the birds piped to you when you ploughed the fields. You'd looked against the faces of red hills when dawn was new, and strained your eyes across blue valleys at the close of day. And men spoke you fair in the roads and children turned to you as you passed, till a little while ago. What came over you that you'd put the joy of living in pawn for thirty pieces of money?

Pet. Let me be! I've become a hard man; and money's a big thing in the world. What's the piping of birds to me ? Leave me alone and let me sell my soul if I like! It's mine to sell!

Tramp. Aye! It's yours to sell. To sell over and over, if you like. There's money to be got for it, more than the first price you take, and pride, and ease of body, and fear of men! But it isn't only your soul you sell, Peter Steele, and nothing you get will compare with that which goes out of you when the first payment clinks in your hand.

Pet. Let me be! Let me be!

Tramp. You'll miss the joy of small things crying in the grass, and the pleasant sadness that comes of watching the fall of yellow leaves. You'll take no comfort in the sound of a woman's singing, or the laughing of a child, or the crackling of a fire in the grate.

Pet. I was never a hand at noticing such things.

Tramp. No, but an honest man shares all the common gifts of God. He feels and is grateful without knowing how or why. He seldom knows the joy of it all, till he's lost the power of feeling.

Pet. Let me be.

Tramp. You'll walk the sunshiny roads and have only the dust of them in your throat. You'll see little lakes lying in the bosom of the hills, like purple wine in cups of green jade, and have only the pain of daylight in your eyes. You'll lie down to sleep with the crystal stars blinking at you, and have only the empty blackness of night in your heart. I know how it will be with you, Peter Steele.

Pet. What do you want me to do?

Tramp. Give up the money of your own free will.

Pet. What interest have you got in seeing me go straight? Whose work are you doing?

Tramp [*slowly*]. It's one thing to die in a splendid agony and save the world. It's another to drag the weight of a name like mine from century to century; to live on and on, and suffer every pain of death; to save a man here and a man there only to balance my own long account—to die—to be forgotten.

Pet. To balance your long account?

Tramp. Turn you from the thing you're about to do, and I toss a grain of dust into the scales. There's a heavy weight to be balanced, Peter Steele, and it's only one day of the year I'm free to search.

Pet. Let me be.

Tramp. Would you rob me, too?

Pet. [*putting his hands to his head*]. Let me think, I tell you! Let me think!

The inside door opens, and PRUDENCE *enters dressed in a wrapper and carrying a small lamp. As the light illumines that side of the room, the glow fades on the* TRAMP'S *face and he disappears.* PETER *sits with his head in his hands, just as* PRUDENCE *left him*

Pru. Peter, Peter, are you asleep?

Pet. [*starting*]. Eh? No.

Pru. Why haven't you come to bed? It's near daylight.

Pet. I've been thinking, Prudence, I've been thinking.

Pru. About—about?

Pet. Say it! I've been thinking of perjury and theft on Christmas morning. I've been thinking of selling my soul for thirty pieces of money. [*He rises.*] But, thank God, I haven't sold it yet.

Pru. [*going to him*]. Oh, Peter! Peter!

Pet. The boy will get his money on the nail. I'm an honest man, Prue. I'm an honest man, I tell you!

Pru. Oh, Peter, I'm glad, I'm glad!

Pet. Every penny he'll get and interest. Fair interest!

Pru. It's a great deal of money, but I'm glad!

Pet. Little enough to give for keeping the joy of living in your heart on Christmas Day.

Pru. I want to tell you something. I couldn't sleep either. Oh, Peter, I couldn't sleep.

Pet. You've been thinking of it, too.

Pru. Not about the money. There was a lame man here just before you came in. I sent him away. It worries me, Peter. I'm sorry I didn't let him in. Uncle saw him. He'd been hurt. His feet and hands were bandaged. I thought. . I thought perhaps . . . I feel as if he'd stopped somewhere near the house.

Pet. Which way did he go?

Pru. Toward the willows at the bend of the road.

Pet. [*reaching for his hat and coat*]. Like as not he'd try to shelter himself there.

He moves towards the outside door.

Pru. Where are you going?

Pet. To find him and fetch him back. We can't let him freeze.

They go together to the outside door and open it. It is morning outside.

Pet. It's morning already.

Pru. Did you ever see such a dawn on the snow?

Pet. Never in my life.

[*He kisses her and goes out*

Pru. [*calling after him*]. I'll have the coffee on the stove.

CURTAIN.

CYRANO DE BERGERAC[1]

A HEROIC COMEDY

EDMOND ROSTAND

TRANSLATED BY

HOWARD THAYER KINGSBURY

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

CYRANO DE BERGERAC,
CHRISTIAN DE NEUVILLETTE,
THE COMTE DE GUICHE,
RAGUENEAU,
LE BRET,
CAPTAIN CARBON DE CASTEL-JALOUX,
THE CADETS,
LIGNIÈRE,
DE VALVERT,
A MARQUIS,
SECOND MARQUIS,
THIRD MARQUIS,
MONTFLEURY,
BELLEROSE,
JODELET,
CUIGY,
BRISSAILLE,
A BUSYBODY,
A MUSKETEER,
ANOTHER,
A SPANISH OFFICER,
A LIGHT GUARDSMAN,
THE DOORKEEPER,
A TRADESMAN,
HIS SON,
A PICKPOCKET
A SPECTATOR
A GUARD,
BERTRANDOU, THE FIFER,
THE CAPUCHIN,
TWO MUSICIANS,
THE POETS,
THE PASTRY-COOKS.

ROXANE,
SISTER MARTHA,
LISE,
MOTHER MARGARET DE JÉSUS,
SISTER CLAIRE,
THE ORANGE-GIRL,
THE DUENNA,
AN ACTRESS,
THE SOUBRETTE,
THE PAGES,
THE FLOWER-GIRL.

The Crowd, Tradesmen, Marquises, Musketeers, Pickpockets, Pastry-cooks, Poets, Gascon Cadets, Actors, Violinists, Pages, Children, Spanish Soldiers, Spectators, Bluestockings, Actresses, Nuns, etc.

(*The first Four Acts in 1640; the Fifth in 1655.*)

FIRST ACT

A PERFORMANCE AT THE HÔTEL DE BOURGOGNE

The hall of the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1640. A sort of tennis court arranged and decorated for performances. The hall is oblong, seen diagonally, so that one of its sides forms the background, which runs from the first entrance on the right to the last entrance on the left, where it meets the stage, which is seen obliquely. This stage is provided with benches on each side, along the wings. The curtain is composed of two pieces of tapestry which may be separated. Above Harlequin's cloak are the royal arms. High steps lead down from the platform to the floor. On each side of these steps is the orchestra. Candles serve as footlights. Two galleries along the side, one above the other; the upper gallery is divided into boxes. No seats in the parterre, which is the actual stage of the theatre; in the rear of this parterre, that is to say, to the right, first entrance, are benches rising in tiers; and under a staircase which leads to the upper seats, and of which only the beginning is visible, a sort of sideboard provided with little candelabra, vases of flowers, glasses, plates of cake, bottles, etc. In the middle of the background, under the tier of boxes, the entrance of the theatre. A large door, which partly opens to let in the audience. On the leaves of the door, as well as in several other places, and above the sideboard, red posters on which are the words "La Clorise." When the curtain rises the hall is half lighted

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and still empty, the chandeliers are lowered in the middle of the parterre, waiting to be lighted.

Scene I

The Public, arriving little by little. Gentlemen, Tradesmen, Lackeys, Pages, Pickpockets, *the* Doorkeeper, *etc.; then the* Marquises, Cuigy, Brissaille, *the* Orange-girl, *the* Violins, *etc.*

A sound of voices is heard behind the door; then a Gentleman *enters suddenly.*

The Doorkeeper [*following him*]. Holloa! Your fifteen pence!

The Gentleman. I come in free.

The Doorkeeper. Why?

The Gentleman. I'm a guardsman of the Royal Household.

The Doorkeeper [*to another* Gentleman *who has just come in*]. And you?

Second Gentleman. Oh, no!

The Doorkeeper. But—

Second Gentleman. I'm a musketeer!

First Gentleman [*to the second*]. The play does not begin till two o'clock;

The house is empty, let us try our foils.

They fence with the foils which they have brought.

A Lackey [*entering*]. Pst—Flanquin!—

Another [*already in*]. Champagne?—

The First [*showing him games which he takes out of his doublet*]. Cards, dice. [*Sits down on the ground.*] Let us play.

The Second [*same action*]. Why, yes, my boy!

First Lackey [*taking from his pocket a candle end, which he lights and sets on the floor*]. I've taken from my master a bit of candle.

A Guard [*to a* Flower-girl *who comes forward*]. It is fine to come Before the lights are lit.

One of the Fencers [*getting a stroke of the foil*]. Touched!

One of the Gamesters. Clubs!

The Guard [*pursuing the girl*]. A kiss!

The Flower-girl [*breaking away*]. We shall be seen.

The Guard [*dragging her into a dark corner*]. No danger!

A Man [*sitting on the floor, together with others who have brought eatables*]. When one comes Before the play, one has a chance to eat.

A Tradesman [*escorting his son*]. Let us wait here, my son.

A Gambler. Aces!

A Man [*taking a bottle of wine from under his cloak, and sitting down*]. A drinker Should drink his Burgundy [*drinks*] at the Hôtel de Bourgogne.

The Tradesman [*to his son*]. Would you not think it was some evil place?

[*Points out the drinker with the end of his cane.*] Drinkers!

[*As they separate, one of the fencers pushes him over.*] Fighters!

[*Falls among the card-players.*] Gamblers!

The Guard [*behind him, still struggling with the girl*]. A kiss!

The Tradesman [*drawing his son away quickly*]. Good heavens!

And just to think that in a hall like this
They played Rotrou, my son!

The Young Man. And Corneille too!

A Band of Pages [*holding one another's hands, enter, singing and dancing*]. Tra la la la la la la la la lère.

The Doorkeeper [*severely, to the pages*]. No nonsense, boys!

First Page [*with wounded dignity*]. Oh, sir, what a suspicion!

[*Quickly to the second, as soon as the* DOORKEEPER *has turned his back.*]
Have you some string?

The Second. Yes, and a hook as well.

First Page. From up above there we can fish for wigs.

A Pickpocket [*gathering several evil-looking men about him*]. And now, young rascals, come and take your lesson,
Since this will be your first attempt at thieving.

Second Page [*calling to other pages already in position in the upper galleries*]. Holloa! Have you your blow-guns?

Third Page [*from up above*]. Yes, and peas!

Blows, and showers them with peas.

The Young Man [*to his father*]. What is the play?

The Tradesman. "Clorise."

The Young Man. Whose work is it?

The Tradesman. Monsieur Balthazar Baro's. 'T is a piece!

Walks off, taking his son's arm

The Pickpocket [*to his pupils*]. Cut off the lace upon the canons' robes!

One of the Audience [*to another, pointing out one of the upper seats*]. I sat there on the first night of "The Cid"!

The Pickpocket [*making the gesture of snatching*]. Watches—

The Tradesman [*returning, to his son*]. You'll see the most distinguished actors—

The Pickpocket [*making the gesture of pulling out with little stealthy jerks*]. Handkerchiefs—

The Tradesman. Montfleury—

A Man [*calling from the upper gallery*]. Light up the candles!

The Tradesman. Bellerose, L'Épy, Beaupré, and Jodelet!

A Page [*in the parterre*]. Ah, here's the Orange-girl!

The Orange-girl. Oranges, milk,
Raspberry syrup, lemonade!

A noise at the door.

A Falsetto Voice. Room, beasts!

A Lackey [*in surprise*]. Marquises—in the pit?

Another Lackey. Oh, for a moment!

Enter a little band of MARQUISES

A Marquis [*seeing the hall empty*]. How's this? Do we arrive like simple shopmen,
Disturbing no one, treading on no toes?
Ah, fie for shame!

[*Finds himself facing some other gentlemen who have come in a few moments before.*]
Cuigy, Brissaille!

Great embracings.

Cuigy. The faithful!
Yes, we arrive even before the candles.

The Marquis. Tell me not of it. I'm in such a humor—

Another. Cheer up, Marquis! Here the lamplighter comes!

The Hall [*greeting the entrance of the lamplighter*]. Ah!

Groups are formed around the candelabra, which he lights. A few people have taken their places in the galleries. LIGNIÈRE *enters the parterre, giving his arm to* CHRISTIAN DE NEUVILLETTE. LIGNIÈRE *is somewhat dishevelled, and looks dissipated, but distinguished.* CHRISTIAN *is handsomely dressed, but rather behind the fashion, appears preoccupied, and looks at the boxes.*

SCENE II

The Same; CHRISTIAN, LIGNIÈRE, *then* RAGUENEAU *and* LE BRET.

Cuigy. Lignière!

Brissaille [*smiling*]. Not drunk yet?

Lignière [*aside to* CHRISTIAN]. Shall I introduce you?

[*Sign of assent from* CHRISTIAN.]

Baron de Neuvillette.

Bows.

The Hall [*hailing the ascent of the first lighted chandelier*]. Ah!

Cuigy [*to* BRISSAILLE, *looking at* CHRISTIAN]. Charming head!

First Marquis [*who has heard*]. Pooh!

Lignière [*introducing them to* CHRISTIAN]. Messieurs de Cuigy, de Brissaille—

Christian [*bowing*]. Delighted!

First Marquis [*to the second*]. He's well enough, but not quite in the style.

Lignière [*to* CUIGY]. He's just from the Touraine.

Christian. Yes, I have been
Scarce twenty days in Paris. But to-morrow
I join the guards, to serve with the Cadets.

First Marquis [*looking at the people as they come into the boxes*]. There's Madame Aubry.

The Orange-girl. Oranges, milk!

The Violins [*tuning up*]. La, la!

Cuigy [*to* CHRISTIAN, *indicating the hall, which is filling up*]. A crowd!

Christian. Yes, quite.

First Marquis. All the fine world.

They name the women as they enter the boxes arrayed in all their finery.

Exchange of bows and smiles.

Second Marquis. Mesdames De Guémenée—

Cuigy. Bois Dauphin—

First Marquis. Whom we loved—

Brissaille. De Chavigny—

Second Marquis. Who plays with all our hearts.

Lignière. Monsieur de Corneille has come back from Rouen.

The Young Man [*to his father*]. The Academy is there?

The Tradesman. Oh, yes! I see
More than a few—Boudu, Boissat, Cureau,
Porchères, Colomby, Bourzeys, and Bourdon:
All names that will not die; how fine it is!

First Marquis. Attention! Our blue-stockings take their places!
Barthénoïde, Urimédonte, Félixe,
Cassandacë.

Second Marquis. Heavens, what charming names!
You know them all, Marquis?

First Marquis. I know them all.

Lignière [*taking* CHRISTIAN *aside*]. My friend, I came to-night to lend you aid;
The lady comes not. Back to drink I go.

Christian [*entreating*]. No! You, who tell me tales of town and court,
Stay; you will know for whom I die of love!

The First Violin [*rapping on his desk with his bow*]. Attention, sirs!

Raises his bow.

The Orange-girl. Macaroons, lemonade!

Christian. I fear lest she be a coquette and witty.
I dare not talk to her; I have no brains.
The language that folk write and speak to-day
Troubles me much. I'm but a timid soldier.
She's always there—to the right, the empty box.

Lignière [*moving as if to start*]. I go.

Christian [*still holding him back*]. No, stay!

Lignière. I cannot. D'Assoucy
Waits for me at the tavern. Here 'tis thirsty.

The Orange-girl [*passing him with a tray*]. Orange juice?

Lignière. No!

The Orange-girl. Milk?

Lignière. Pooh!

The Orange-girl. Muscatel?

Lignière. Stop! [*to* CHRISTIAN] I'll stay a bit. Let's try your muscatel.

Sits down by the sideboard. The girl pours out his muscatel.

Cries in the Crowd [*on the entrance of a little man, rather fat and very beaming*]. Ah, Ragueneau!

Lignière [*to* CHRISTIAN]. Ragueneau, the pastry-cook.

Ragueneau [*dressed in the Sunday costume of a pastry-cook, quickly advancing towards* LIGNIÈRE]. Sir, have you seen Monsieur de Cyrano?

Lignière [*introducing* RAGUENEAU *to* CHRISTIAN]. The pastry-cook of actors and of poets!

Ragueneau [*in confusion*]. You honor me too much—

Lignière. Be still, Mæcenas!

Ragueneau. These gentlemen are served by me—

Lignière. On credit.
He is himself a poet—

Ragueneau. So they say.

Lignière. Crazy on verse.

Ragueneau. 'T is true that for an ode—

Lignière. You'd give a tart.

Ragueneau. Oh, just a little one!

Lignière. He would disclaim it.—And for a triolet
Would you not give—

Ragueneau. Some rolls!

Lignière [*severely*]. Milk-rolls, of course.
You like the theatre, then?

Ragueneau. I idolize it!

Lignière. You buy your theatre-tickets with your cakes.
Your place to-day among us cost how much?

Ragueneau. Four cream-puffs, fifteen patties [*Looks around on every side.*]—I'm astonished!
Monsieur de Cyrano has not arrived?

Lignière. But why?

Ragueneau. Montfleury plays!

Lignière. 'T is true, this barrel
Will play for us to-night the rôle of Phédon.
But what cares Cyrano?

Ragueneau. You do not know?
Montfleury, whom he hates, sirs, he forbade
To appear upon the stage for a whole month.

Lignière [*who has reached his fourth glass*]. Well, then?

Ragueneau. Montfleury plays.

Cuigy [*who has approached with his group of friends*]. He cannot stop him.

Ragueneau. Oh! Oh! I've come to see.

First Marquis. Who is this man, This Cyrano?

Cuigy. A lad well skilled in sword-play.

Second Marquis. Noble?

Cuigy. Enough. In the Guards; a Cadet.

[*Pointing out a gentleman going to and fro in the hall, as if looking for some one.*]

His friend Le Bret can tell you.

[*Calls.*] Oh, Le Bret!

[LE BRET *comes toward them.*]

You look for Bergerac?

Le Bret. Yes, I am anxious—

Cuigy. He is a man who's quite out of the common?

Le Bret [*affectionately*]. He is the choicest soul of mortal men.

Ragueneau. A poet!

Cuigy. Swordsman!

Brissaille. Doctor!

Le Bret. And musician!

Lignière. And what a strange appearance he presents!

Ragueneau. In truth, I think that Philippe de Champaigne,

Solemn and grave, will never paint him for us;

But with his strange, grotesque extravagances

He would have lent to Jacques Callot, now dead,

A swashbuckler, to place among his masks.

His hat is triply plumed, his doublet puffed,

His sword-point holds his cloak far out behind,

Like the tail feathers of a strutting cock;

Prouder than all the braves that Gascony

Has borne and e'er will cherish like a mother;

He bears, projecting from his spreading ruff,

A nose—ah, what a nose it is, my lords!

To see one pass with such a nose as that

You could but cry, "Oh, no! 'T is magnified!"

And then you smile and say, "He'll take it off,"

But this Monsieur de Bergerac never does.

Le Bret [*shaking his head*]. Let him that would remark on it beware!

Ragueneau [*proudly*]. His blade's the half of the dread shears of Fate!

First Marquis [*shrugging his shoulders*]. He will not come.

Ragueneau He will—I bet a chicken

Cooked à la Ragueneau!

The Marquis [*smiling*]. Done!

Noises of admiration in the hall. ROXANE *has just appeared in her box. She sits down in front, and her duenna takes her place in the rear.* CHRISTIAN, *busy paying the* ORANGE-GIRL, *does not see her.*

Second Marquis [*with little exclamations*]. Ah, sirs, she is

Terribly ravishing!

First Marquis. A blushing peach

Smiling with strawberry lips!

Second Marquis. And so refreshing,

If you come near you catch cold in your heart.

Christian [*raises his head, sees* ROXANE, *and quickly grasping* LIGNIÈRE *by the arm*]. 'T is she!

Lignière [*looking*]. Ah?

Christian. Yes, speak quick. I am afraid!

Lignière [*swallowing his muscatel in little sips*]. Madeleine Robin, called Roxane,—a wit
And learned.

Christian. Alas!

Lignière. Free, orphan, and a cousin
Of Cyrano—of whom we spoke.

At this instant a very distinguished-looking nobleman, with the blue ribbon around his neck, enters the box, and stands talking for a moment with ROXANE

Christian [*starting*]. This man?—

Lignière [*beginning to show the effects of drink, winking*]. Ha! ha! The Comte de Guiche, in love with her,—
Married to Richelieu's niece,—would marry Roxane
To a Monsieur de Valvert, old and dull,
A vicomte, and obliging,—you know the way!
She's not consented, but De Guiche has power;
He well can persecute a simple girl.
Besides, I have exposed his evil plan
In a song,—Ho, he should bear me a grudge!
The end was biting,—Listen,—

Gets up, staggering, and holding his glass aloft ready to sing.

Christian. No, good night.

Lignière. You go?

Christian. To seek De Valvert.

Lignière. Have a care.
'T is he will kill you!

[*Indicating* ROXANE *with the corner of his eye.*]
Stay, they're looking at you.

Christian. 'T is true.

He remains lost in thought. The group of pickpockets at this moment, seeing him with head in air and mouth open, draws near him.

Lignière. I go; I'm thirsty. I'm expected
In the wine shops.

[*Goes out in a zigzag course*

Le Bret [*who has made the tour of the hall, returning towards* RAGUENEAU, *with reassured voice*]. No Cyrano.

Ragueneau [*incredulously*]. And yet—

Le Bret. I still have hopes he has not seen the poster.

The Hall. Begin! Begin!

SCENE III

The Same, without LIGNIÈRE; DE GUICHE, VALVERT, *then* MONTFLEURY.

A Marquis [*seeing* DE GUICHE *coming out of Roxane's box and crossing the parterre, surrounded by obsequious gentlemen, the* VICOMTE DE VALVERT *among them*]. De Guiche has quite a court!

Another. Pf!— Still a Gascon.

The First. A Gascon keen and cool.
That kind succeeds! Let us pay our respects.

They go towards DE GUICHE.

Second Marquis. Beautiful ribbons! What color, Comte de Guiche?
"Kiss-me-my-darling," or "Breast-of-the-doe"?

De Guiche. The color's called "Sick Spaniard."

First Marquis. Then the color
Tells but the truth, for soon, thanks to your valor,
The Spaniard will fare very ill in Flanders.

De Guiche. I go upon the stage. You come?

[*He turns toward the stage, followed by all the* MARQUISES *and gentlemen. He turns back and calls.*] Valvert!

Christian [*watching and listening to them, starts when he hears this name*]. The Vicomte! Ah, let me throw in his face—

[*Puts his hand in his pocket and finds the hand of a thief about to rob him. Turns around.*]

What?

The Pickpocket. Oh!

Christian. I want a glove!

The Pickpocket [*with a piteous smile*]. You find a hand.

[*Changing his tone, quickly, and aside.*]

Let go! I'll tell a secret—

Christian [*still holding fast*]. What?

The Pickpocket. Lignière,
Who just left—

Christian [*same action*]. Well?

The Pickpocket. —is near to his last hour.
A song of his cut deep one of the great—
A hundred men—I'm one—to-night are posted—

Christian. A hundred? And by whom?

The Pickpocket. A secret!

Christian [*shrugging his shoulders*]. Oh!

The Pickpocket [*with great dignity*]. Professional confidence!

Christian. Where will they be?

The Pickpocket. Hard by the Porte de Nesle, upon his way.
Warn him!

Christian [*at last letting go of the man's hand*]. But where to find him?

The Pickpocket. Go the rounds
Of all the wine shops. Try the Golden Wine-press,
The Pine Cone, or the Sign o' the Broken Belt,
The Double Torch, the Funnels,—and in each
Leave him a little note to give him warning.

Christian. I run. The scoundrels! 'Gainst one man a hundred!

[*Looking at* ROXANE *with love.*]

Leave her!

[*At* VALVERT, *with fury.*] And him! But Lignière I must save.

Goes out on a run. DE GUICHE, *the* VICOMTE, *the* MARQUISES, *and all the gentlemen have disappeared behind the curtain to take their places on the stage benches. The parterre is entirely filled. Not an empty place in the galleries or the boxes.*

The Hall. Begin!

A Tradesman [*whose wig flies away at the end of a string, fished up by a page in the upper gallery*]. My wig!

Cries of Joy. He's bald. Cheer for the pages!

Ha! ha! ha!

The Tradesman [*furious and shaking his fist*]. Little rascal!

Laughter and Shouts [*beginning very loud and diminishing*]. Ha! ha! ha!

Total silence.

Le Bret [*astonished*]. This sudden silence?

[*A spectator speaks to him aside.*] Ah?

A Spectator. They say 'tis certain!

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Walter Hampden as Cyrano

Scattering Murmurs. Hush! He appears? No! Yes! In the latticed box.

The Cardinal! The Cardinal? 'T is he!

A Page. The devil! Now we must behave ourselves.

A rapping on the stage. Every one becomes motionless. A pause.

The Voice of a Marquis [*in the silence, behind the curtain*]. That candle should be snuffed!

Another Marquis [*thrusting his head out between the curtains*]. A chair!

A chair is passed up over the heads of the crowd, from hand to hand. The MARQUIS *takes it and disappears, after having thrown several kisses to the boxes.*

A Spectator. Be still!

The three raps are heard. The curtain opens. Tableau. *The* MARQUISES *are seated at the sides in careless attitudes. The background represents a pastoral scene, painted in light colors. Four little crystal chandeliers light the stage. The* VIOLINS *play softly.*

Le Bret [*to* RAGUENEAU, *aside*]. Montfleury will appear?

Ragueneau [*also aside*]. Yes, he begins.

Le Bret. Cyrano is not there?

Ragueneau. I've lost my bet.

Le Bret. So much the better!

The music of a shepherd's pipe is heard, and MONTFLEURY *appears, very fat, in a shepherd's costume, his hat decorated with roses and cocked over one ear. He is blowing on a pipe ornamented with ribbons.*

The Parterre [*applauding*]. Bravo, Montfleury!

Montfleury [*after bowing, playing the role of* Phédon].

Oh, happy he, who in sweet solitude
Becomes a willing exile from the Court;
And who, when Zephyrus has gently breathed—

A Voice [*in the middle of the parterre*]. Rascal, was't not for a month I warned you off?

Amazement. Every one turns around, murmurs.

Various Voices. What is't?

People stand up in the boxes to look.

Cuigy. 'T is he!

Le Bret [*in alarm*]. Cyrano!

The Voice. King of gluttons,
Off from the stage at once!

All the Hall [*in indignation*]. Oh!

Montfleury. But—

The Voice. You baulk?

Various Voices [*from the parterre and the boxes*]. Enough! Hush! Play, Montfleury,—do not fear!

Montfleury [*in a voice ill at ease*].

Oh, happy he who in sweet solitude—

The Voice [*more threateningly*]. Well, must I plant a forest on your shoulders,
Monarch of scoundrels?

A cane at the end of an arm springs out above the heads of the crowd.

Montfleury [*his voice growing weaker and weaker*].

Happy he—

The cane is shaken.

The Voice. Go!

The Parterre. Oh!

Montfleury [*choking*].

Oh, happy he, who—

CYRANO [*rising from the parterre, standing on a chair, his arms crossed, his hat cocked, his moustache bristling, his nose terrible*].

Ah, I shall grow angry!

Sensation at his appearance.

Scene IV

The Same; afterwards Bellerose *and* Jodelet.

Montfleury [*to the* Marquises]. Come to my aid, sirs!

A Marquis [*indifferently*]. Well, go on and act.

Cyrano. Lump, if you act, I needs must punish you!

The Marquis. Hold!

Cyrano. Let the Marquises sit quietly;
Or else my cane may trifle with their ribbons!

All the Marquises [*standing*]. This is too much! Montfleury—

Cyrano. Let him go;
Or I shall clip his ears, and rip him up!

A Voice. But—

Cyrano. Let him go!

Another Voice. And yet—

Cyrano. 'T is not yet done?
[*Going through the motion of rolling up his sleeves.*]
Good! I approach the stage as 't were a sideboard,
To carve in slices this Italian sausage.

Montfleury [*collecting all his dignity*]. Your words to me insult the Comic Muse!

Cyrano [*very politely*]. If this Muse, sir, to whom you are as naught,
To meet you had the honor, mark my words,
When she saw all your fat stupidity
She'd use her sandals on you with a will!

The Parterre. Montfleury! Montfleury! Give Baro's play!

Cyrano [*to those who are shouting around him*]. I beg of you, have pity on my scabbard;
If you keep on it will yield up its blade!

The circle grows larger.

The Crowd [*drawing back*]. Holloa!

Cyrano [*to* Montfleury]. Get off the stage!

The Crowd [*drawing nearer and grumbling*]. Oh!

Cyrano [*turning around quickly*]. Who objects?

They draw back again.

A Voice [*singing in the background*].

> Monsieur de Cyrano
> Rules us with iron sway;
> But, though he says us no,
> Still "Clorise" they will play.

All the Hall [*singing*].

> —Still "Clorise" they will play.

Cyrano. If once again I hear you sing this song,
I'll slay you all.

A Tradesman. You are not Samson yet!

Cyrano. Will you, sir, kindly lend to me your jawbone?

A Lady [*in one of the boxes*]. This is unheard of!

A Nobleman. It is scandalous!

A Tradesman. It is vexatious!

A Page. And this is amusement!

The Parterre. Ksss—Cyrano!—Montfleury!

Cyrano. Silence, all!

Shouts and cat-calls from the parterre.

Cyrano. I order you straightway to hold your tongues;
I send a general challenge to you all!
Come on, young heroes, I will take your names,
Each in his turn; I'll give to each his number!
Come, who's the man who bravely heads the list?
You, sir? No! You? No! Who is for a duel?

I'll speed him with the honors which are due.
Let all who wish to die now raise their hands.
[*Silence.*]
Shame will not let you see my naked blade?
No name? No hand?— 'Tis well. I shall go on.
[*Turning back towards the stage, where* MONTFLEURY *waits in despair.*]
Now! I desire to see the theatre healed
Of this foul sore. If not—
[*his hand on his sword*]—the lancet then.
Montfleury. I—
Cyrano [*descends from his chair, sits down in the middle of a circle which is formed around him, and settles himself as if at home*]. I shall clap my hands three times, like this!
You'll vanish at the third.
The Parterre [*amused*]. Ah!
Cyrano [*clapping his hands*]. One!
Montfleury. I—
A Voice [*from the boxes*]. Stay!
The Parterre. He'll stay—he will not—
Montfleury. I think, gentlemen—
Cyrano. Two!
Montfleury. I am sure it would be better—
Cyrano. Three!
[MONTFLEURY *disappears as if through a trap door. A burst of laughter, hisses, and hoots*
The Hall. Coward! Come back!
Cyrano [*beaming, drops back in his chair and crosses his legs*]. Let him come, if he dare!
A Tradesman. The spokesman of the troupe!

BELLEROSE *advances and bows*
The Boxes. Ah!—there's Bellerose!
Bellerose [*with elegance*]. Most noble lords—
The Parterre. No! Jodelet!
Jodelet [*Comes forward, talking through his nose*]. Pack of curs!
The Parterre. Oh! Bravo! Good enough! Bravo!
Jodelet. No bravos!
The fat tragedian whose girth you love
Felt—
The Parterre. He's a coward.
Jodelet. —that he should go out!
The Parterre. Let him come back!
Some of the Crowd. No!
Others. Yes!
A Young Man [*to* CYRANO]. But, sir, in short,
What reason have you to hate Montfleury?
Cyrano [*graciously, still seated*]. Young bantling, I have two, and each alone
Is quite enough: First, he's a wretched actor,
Who mouths, and utters with a porter's grunts
The lines which ought to fly away like birds;
The second—is my secret.
The Old Tradesman [*behind him*]. But you rob us
Of "Clorise," without scruples,—I object—
Cyrano [*turning his chair towards the* TRADESMAN, *respectfully*]. Old mule, since Baro's verse is less than nothing
I interrupt without regret!
The Blue-stockings [*in the boxes*]. Our Baro!
My dear! How can he say it? Ah! Good heavens!

Cyrano [*turning his chair towards the boxes, gallantly*]. Fair creatures, beam and blossom; be seneschals
Of dreams, and with a smile charm us to death.
Inspire poetry—but judge it not!
Bellerose. The money that must be returned?
Cyrano [*turning his chair towards the stage*]. Bellerose,
You have just spoken the first word of sense!
I make no holes in Thespis' honored cloak.
[*Gets up and tosses a bag on the stage.*]
Catch this purse on the fly and hold your tongue!
The Hall [*dazed*]. Ah! Oh!
Jodelet [*deftly catching the purse and trying its weight*]. For this price, sir, I give you leave
To come each night to stop "Clorise."
The Hall. Hoo! hoo!
Jodelet. We should be hissed together—
Bellerose. Clear the hall!
[*They begin to go out, while* CYRANO *looks on with a satisfied air. But the crowd soon stops to listen to the scene which ensues, and the exit ceases. The women in the boxes, who were already standing with their cloaks on, stop to listen and end by sitting down again*
Le Bret [*to* CYRANO]. 'T is mad!
A Busybody [*who has approached* CYRANO]. Montfleury! It is scandalous!
He is protected by the Duc de Candale.
Have you a patron?
Cyrano. No!
The Busybody. You have not?
Cyrano. No!
The Busybody. What, no great lord to shield you with his name?
Cyrano [*with visible annoyance*]. I said no twice. Must I then make it three?
No; no protector—
[*his hand on his sword*]—but a good protectress!
The Busybody. But you will leave the town?
Cyrano. That all depends.
The Busybody. The Duc de Candale's arm is long.
Cyrano. Less long
Than mine is—
[*showing his sword*]—when I give it this extension.
The Busybody. You do not dream of trying—
Cyrano. Yes, I do!
The Busybody. But—
Cyrano. Right about face, now!
The Busybody. But—
Cyrano. Right about!
Or tell me why you are looking at my nose.
The Busybody [*in confusion*]. I—
Cyrano [*stepping up to him*]. What is strange about it?
The Busybody [*drawing back*]. You mistake—
Cyrano. Is it, sir, soft and swinging like a trunk?
The Busybody [*same action*]. I did not—
Cyrano. Or hooked, like an owl's beak?
The Busybody. I—
Cyrano. There's a wart upon it?
The Busybody. But—
Cyrano. Or a fly
Walking along it slowly? What's so strange?

The Busybody. Oh—
Cyrano. Is't a freak of nature?
The Busybody. But I knew
Enough to keep my eyes from glancing at it.
Cyrano. And, if you please, why should you not look at it?
The Busybody. I—
Cyrano. It disgusts you, then?
The Busybody. Sir—
Cyrano. Seems its color
Unwholesome to you?
The Busybody. Sir!
Cyrano. Does its shape shock you?
The Busybody. No, not at all!
Cyrano. Why so disparaging?
Perhaps you think it is a trifle large.
The Busybody [*stammering*]. I think it small, quite small, a tiny one!
Cyrano. What? Call it so absurd a name as that?
Call my nose little?
The Busybody. Heavens!
Cyrano. My nose is huge!
Poor flat-nose, stupid snub-nose, flat-head, learn
'T is an appendage I am proud to bear,
Because a large nose is the unfailing sign
Of a good man and kindly, generous,
Courteous, full of courage and of wit;
Such as I am, and such as you're forbidden
Ever to dream yourself, poor good-for-naught!
For the inglorious face above your collar,
Which my hand now will find, is full as bare—
Boxes his ears.
The Busybody. Oh!
Cyrano. —Of pride, of wit, of poetry, of art,
Of all adornment, and in fine of noses—
[*Turns him about by the shoulder suiting the action to the word.*]
—As that my boot shall find below your backbone!
The Busybody [*escaping*]. The Guard! Help! Help!
Cyrano. My warning to the idlers
Who find the middle of my face amusing;—
And if the joker's noble, 't is my custom
To give to him before I let him go
Steel and not leather, in front, and higher up.
De Guiche [*who has come down from the stage, with the* MARQUISES]. He becomes tiresome!
The Vicomte de Valvert [*shrugging his shoulders*]. He blows his trumpet!
De Guiche. Will no one answer him?
The Vicomte. No one? But wait!
I shall fling at him now some of my wit!
[*Advances towards* CYRANO, *who is watching him, and takes his place in front of him with a silly air.*]
You—your nose is—nose is—very large.
Cyrano [*gravely*]. Very!
The Vicomte [*smiling*]. Ha!
Cyrano [*imperturbable*]. That is all?
The Vicomte. But—
Cyrano. No, young man.
That is somewhat too brief. You might say—Lord!—
Many and many a thing, changing your tone,
As for example these;—Aggressively:
"Sir, had I such a nose I'd cut it off!"
Friendly: "But it must dip into your cup.
You should have made a goblet tall to drink from."

Descriptive: "'T is a crag—a peak—
a cape!
I said a cape?—'t is a peninsula."
Inquisitive: "To what use do you put
This oblong sheath; is it a writing-
case
Or scissors-box?" Or, in a gracious
tone:
"Are you so fond of birds, that like a
father
You spend your time and thought to
offer them
This roosting-place to rest their little
feet?"
Quarrelsome: "Well, sir, when you
smoke your pipe
Can the smoke issue from your nose,
without
Some neighbor crying, 'the chimney
is afire'?"
Warning: "Be careful, lest this weight
drag down
Your head, and stretch you prostrate
on the ground."
Tenderly: "Have a small umbrella
made,
For fear its color fade out in the sun."
Pedantic: "Sir, only the animal
Called by the poet Aristophanes
'Hippocampelephantocámelos'
Should carry so much flesh and bone
upon him!"
Cavalier: "Friend, is this peg in the
fashion?
To hang one's hat on, it must be
convenient."
Emphatic: "Magisterial nose, no
wind
Could give thee all a cold, except the
mistral."
Dramatic: "'T is the Red Sea when
it bleeds!"
Admiring: "What a sign for a
perfumer!'
Poetic: "Is't a conch; are you a
Triton?"
Naïve: "When does one visit this
great sight?"
Respectful: "Let me, sir, pay my
respects.
This might be called fronting upon
the street."
Countrified: "That's a nose that is a
nose!
A giant turnip or a baby melon!"
Or military: "Guard against cavalry!"
Practical: "Will you put it in a
raffle?
It surely, sir, would be the winning
number!"
Or parodying Pyramus, with a sob:
"There is the nose that ruins the
symmetry
Of its master's features; the traitor
blushes for it."
My friend, that is about what you'd
have said
If you had had some learning or some
wit;
But wit, oh! most forlorn of human
creatures,
You never had a bit of; as for letters
You only have the four that spell out
"Fool"!
Moreover, had you owned the imagi-
nation
Needed to give you power, before this
hall,
To offer me these mad jests—all of
them—
You would not even have pronounced
the quarter
O' the half of one's beginning, for I
myself
Offer them to myself with dash
enough,
But suffer no one else to say them to
me.

De Guiche [*trying to lead away the dazed* VICOMTE]. Vicomte, leave off!

The Vicomte [*choking*]. These great and lofty airs!

A rustic, who—who—even wears no gloves,

And goes about without a single ribbon.

Cyrano. It is my character that I adorn.

I do not deck me like a popinjay;

But though less foppish, I am better dressed:

I would not sally forth, through carelessness,

With an insult ill wiped out, or with my conscience

Sallow with sleep still lingering in its eyes,

Honor in rags, or scruples dressed in mourning.

But I go out with all upon me shining,

With liberty and freedom for my plume,

Not a mere upright figure;—'t is my soul

That I thus hold erect as if with stays,

And decked with daring deeds instead of ribbons,

Twirling my wit as it were my moustache,

The while I pass among the crowd, I make

Bold truths ring out like spurs.

The Vicomte. But, sir—

Cyrano. I have

No gloves?—A pity!—I had just one left,

One of a worn-out pair!—which troubled me!

I left it recently in some one's face.

The Vicomte. Knave, rascal, booby, flat-foot, scum o' the earth!

Cyrano [*taking off his hat and bowing as if the* VICOMTE *had just introduced himself*]. Ah? And I—Cyrano-Savinien-Hercule de Bergerac.

Laughter.

The Vicomte [*in a temper*]. Buffoon!

Cyrano [*giving a cry like one who feels a sudden pain*]. Oh!

The Vicomte [*who was going off, turning about*]. What's he saying now?

Cyrano [*with grimaces of pain*]. I must

Shake it, because it falls asleep—the fault

Of leaving it long idle—

The Vicomte. What's the matter?

Cyrano. My sword-blade tingles!

The Vicomte [*drawing his own sword*]. Very well, come on!

Cyrano. I shall give you a charming little stroke.

The Vicomte [*with disdain*]. Poet!—

Cyrano. A poet, yes! and such a one,

That, while I fence with you, I'll improvise

A ballade for you.

The Vicomte. A ballade?

Cyrano. I suppose

You do not e'en imagine what that is?

The Vicomte. But—

Cyrano [*as if reciting a lesson*]. The ballade, then, is made up of three stanzas,

Of eight lines—

The Vicomte [*shuffling his feet*]. Oh!

Cyrano [*continuing*]. And a refrain of four.

The Vicomte. You—

Cyrano. I'll make one and fight you both at once.

And at the last verse touch you, sir.

The Vicomte. No!

Cyrano. No?

The ballade of Monsieur de Bergerac's duel
At the Hôtel de Bourgogne with a booby.

The Vicomte. What is that, if you please?

Cyrano. That is the title.

The Hall [*excited to the highest pitch*]. In place!—No noise!—In line!—This is amusing.

Tableau. *A circle of curious onlookers in the parterre, the* MARQUISES *and the* OFFICERS *mixed in with the* TRADESMEN *and common people. The* PAGES *climb on people's shoulders to see better. All the women stand up in the boxes. To the right* DE GUICHE *and his gentlemen. To the left* LE BRET, RAGUENEAU, CUIGY, *etc.*

Cyrano [*closing his eyes for a moment*]. Wait, let me choose my rhymes—I have them now:

My hat I toss lightly away;
From my shoulders I slowly let fall
The cloak which conceals my array,
And my sword from my scabbard I call,
Like Céladon, graceful and tall,
Like Scaramouche, quick hand and brain,—
And I warn you, my friend, once for all,
I shall thrust when I end the refrain.

[*The swords meet.*]

You were rash thus to join in the fray;
Like a fowl I shall carve you up small,
Your ribs, 'neath your doublet so gay,
Your breast, where the blue ribbons fall,
Ding dong! ring your bright trappings all;
My point flits like a fly on the pane,
As I clearly announce to the hall
I shall thrust when I end the refrain.

I need one more rhyme for "array"—
You give ground, you turn white as the wall—
And so lend me the word "runaway."
There! you have let your point fall
As I parry your best lunge of all;
I begin a new line, the end's plain,
Your skewer hold tight, lest it fall.
I shall thrust when I end the refrain.

[*Announces solemnly.*]

REFRAIN

Prince, on the Lord you must call!
I gain ground, I advance once again,
I feint, I lunge. (*Lunging.*) There! that is all!

[*The* VICOMTE *staggers.* CYRANO *salutes.*]

For I thrust as I end the refrain.

Shouts. Applause in the boxes. Flowers and handkerchiefs are thrown. The OFFICERS *surround* CYRANO *and congratulate him.* RAGUENEAU *dances with enthusiasm.* LE BRET *is dizzy with joy. The Vicomte's friends hold him up and lead him away.*

The Crowd [*in one long cry*]. Ah!

A Light Guardsman. Superb!

A Woman. A pretty stroke!

Ragueneau. Magnificent!

A Marquis. Something quite new!

Le Bret. Mad folly!

Voices [*in the confusion about* CYRANO]. Compliments, Congratulations, bravo!

Voice of a Woman. He's a hero!

A Musketeer [*advancing quickly toward* CYRANO *with outstretched hands*]. Will you allow me, sir?—'T was right well done,
And these are things I think I understand;
Besides, I have expressed my joy by stamping!

[*Withdraws*

Cyrano [*to* CUIGY]. Who is this gentleman?

Cuigy. He's D'Artagnan!

Le Bret [*to* CYRANO, *taking him by the arm*]. Come, let us talk—

Cyrano. Let the crowd go out first.
[*To* BELLEROSE.] May I wait?

Bellerose [*respectfully*]. Certainly!

Shouts are heard without.

Jodelet [*after looking out*]. They hiss Montfleury!

Bellerose [*solemnly*]. "Sic transit"—[*Changing his tone, to the* DOORKEEPER *and the* Candle-snuffer.] Sweep. Close up. But leave the lights.

We shall return when we have had our supper,
For a rehearsal of to-morrow's farce.

[JODELET *and* BELLEROSE *go out, after low bows to* CYRANO

The Doorkeeper [*to* CYRANO]. You do not dine?

Cyrano. I?—No!

Le Bret [*to* CYRANO]. Because?

Cyrano [*proudly*]. Because—

[*Changing his tone when he sees that the* DOORKEEPER *has gone.*]

I have no money!

Le Bret [*making the gesture of throwing a bag*]. What! the bag of crowns?

Cyrano. Inheritance, in one day thou art spent!

Le Bret. How will you live this month, then?

Cyrano. Naught is left.

Le Bret. What folly 't was to throw away the bag!

Cyrano. But what a stroke!

The Orange-girl [*coughing behind her little counter*]. Hum! hum!

[CYRANO *and* LE BRET *turn about. She advances timidly.*] To see you fasting—

It breaks my heart.

[*Showing the sideboard.*] I have all that is needed.

[*With enthusiasm.*] Take what you wish!

Cyrano [*taking off his hat*]. My Gascon pride forbids me,
My child, to take one dainty from your hands,
And yet I fear that this may cause you pain,
And so I shall accept—
[*Goes to the sideboard and chooses.*]—oh, nothing much!
A grape—
[*She starts to give him the bunch; he picks one grape.*] But one! This glass of water!
[*She starts to pour in some wine; he stops her.*] Clear!
And half a macaroon!
He returns the other half.

Le Bret. But this is foolish!

The Orange-girl. Oh, something more!

Cyrano. Why, yes, your hand to kiss!

He kisses the hand which she holds out, as he would the hand of a princess.

The Orange-girl. I thank you, sir.
[*She courtesies.*] Good night!
[*She goes out*

SCENE V

CYRANO, LE BRET, *then the* DOORKEEPER.

Cyrano [*to* LE BRET]. Talk, I will listen.

[*He takes his place before the sideboard, arranging before him the macaroon.*]

Dinner!
[*the glass of water.*] Drink!
[*the grape.*] Sweets!
[*He sits down.*] There, I sit down at table!
Ah, friend, I was unconscionably hungry!
[*Eating.*] You said?

Le Bret. That these fools, with their warlike airs,
Will spoil your wit if you consort with them;

Consult men of good sense, and so find out
The effect of your mad sally
Cyrano [*finishing his macaroon*]. It was huge.
Le Bret. The Cardinal—
Cyrano [*beaming*]. So the Cardinal was there?
Le Bret. —Must have esteemed it—
Cyrano. Quite original!
Le Bret. Yet—
Cyrano. He's an author. It cannot displease him
If some one come to spoil a rival's work.
Le Bret. You'll have too many enemies against you!
Cyrano [*attacking the grape*]. About how many have I made to-night?
Le Bret. Without the women, forty-eight.
Cyrano. Come, count!
Le Bret. De Guiche, Montfleury, Valvert, and the Tradesman;
The Academy and Baro—
Cyrano. That's enough.
You greatly please me!
Le Bret. But this mode of life
Where will it lead you? And what is your plan?
Cyrano. I wandered in a maze; too many courses,
And too bewildering, there were to choose.
I've chosen—
Le Bret. What?
Cyrano. Oh, far the simplest one:
I have resolved in all things to excel!
Le Bret [*shrugging his shoulders.*] So be it. But the reason of your hatred
For Montfleury, the real one!
Cyrano [*getting up*]. This Silenus,
Who cannot reach the centre of his paunch,
Thinks himself still a charmer of the women;
And while he plays his part and mouths his words
Casts glances at them with his fishy eyes!
Him have I hated since one night he let
His gaze rest on her—Oh, I seemed to see
Upon a flower fair a great slug crawling.
Le Bret [*amazed*]. What? What? And can it be—
Cyrano [*with a bitter smile*]. That I should love?—
[*Changing his tone and seriously.*]
I love.
Le Bret. And may I know? You never told me.
Cyrano. Whom I love? Think, it is forbidden me
To dream of love from e'en the most ill-favored—
This nose, which goes before me half a mile!—
And so whom do I love?—the answer's plain!
I love—it is absurd—the very fairest!
Le Bret. The fairest?
Cyrano. Yes. In short, in the whole world;
The most consummate charms,—
[*with great dejection*] —the fairest hair!
Le Bret. Heavens, who is this woman?
Cyrano. A mortal danger,
Without intention; charming, without thought;
A trap by nature set, a damask rose
In which, close hid in ambush, Love is lurking!

He who has known her smile has known perfection.
Her grace is all unconscious; she sums up
The whole of heaven in a single movement;
And, Venus, thou couldst never mount thy shell,
Nor thou, Diana, walk the leafy forests,
As she mounts in her chair and walks these streets!

Le Bret. I understand. 'T is clear!

Cyrano. 'T is quite transparent!

Le Bret. Your cousin Madeleine Robin?

Cyrano. Yes, Roxane.

Le Bret. Well, that is for the best. You love her? Tell her!
You won great glory in her eyes to-day!

Cyrano. Look at me, friend, and tell me what fond hopes
This great protuberance could ever leave me?
Oh! I have no illusions!—By the gods,
Sometimes I soften, on an evening clear;
I seek some green spot, when the hour is sweet,
I scent the Spring with my poor monstrous nose.
'Neath the moon's silver beams my gaze will follow
Some woman passing on her lover's arm,
And then I think I too should like to walk,
With sweetheart on my arm, in the fair moonlight.
My fancy rises, I forget,—and then
I see my profile's shadow on the wall!

Le Bret [*with emotion*]. My friend!—

Cyrano. My friend, I have my gloomy hours,
Knowing myself so ugly, and sometimes,
When quite alone—

Le Bret [*quickly taking his hand*]. You weep?

Cyrano. Ah, never that!
No, that would be too ugly, if along
This monstrous nose a tear should trickle down!
I'll not permit, so long as I am master,
That such gross ugliness contaminate
The grace divine of tears! For, mark you well,
There's nothing more sublime on earth than tears;
I would not have one put to ridicule
By me, the while my plight should raise a laugh.

Le Bret. Be not so mad! For love is naught but luck!

Cyrano [*shaking his head*]. No, I love Cleopatra. Am I Cæsar?
I worship Berenice. Am I Titus?

Le Bret. But your wit! Your courage!—This poor child,
Who offered you just now this modest meal,—
Her eyes, you plainly saw, misliked you not!

Cyrano [*struck by the idea*]. That is the truth!

Le Bret. Well, then; Roxane herself
Grew pale watching your duel.

Cyrano. She grew pale?

Le Bret. Her heart and mind already are much moved.
Dare, tell her, so that—

Cyrano. She'll laugh in my face!

No! 'T is the one thing in the world I fear.

The Doorkeeper [*introducing some one to* CYRANO]. Sir, you are asked for.

Cyrano [*seeing the* DUENNA]. Heavens! her duenna!

SCENE VI

CYRANO, LE BRET, the DUENNA.

The Duenna [*with a profound bow*]. Some one would be informed by her brave cousin

Where one can see him secretly.

Cyrano [*in amazement*]. See me?

The Duenna [*with a courtesy*]. See you. Some one has things to tell you.

Cyrano. Things?

The Duenna [*with another courtesy*]. Yes.

Cyrano [*staggering*]. Heavens!

The Duenna. To-morrow, at the blush of dawn,

Some one will go to hear mass at Saint-Roch.

Cyrano [*leaning on* LE BRET]. Heavens!

The Duenna. And after, where can some one stop

For a short talk?

Cyrano [*delighted*]. Where—I—but —Lord—

The Duenna. Speak quick.

Cyrano. I'm thinking—

The Duenna. Where?

Cyrano. Ragueneau's, the pastry-cook's.

The Duenna. Where?

Cyrano. On the Rue—Ah, God! St. Honoré.

The Duenna [*retiring*]. She'll go, be there, at seven o'clock.

Cyrano. I shall!

SCENE VII

CYRANO, LE BRET, *afterwards the* ACTORS *and* ACTRESSES, CUIGY, BRISSAILLE, LIGNIÈRE, *the* DOORKEEPER, *the* VIOLINS.

Cyrano [*falling into* LE BRET'S *arms*]. From her—for me—a meeting.

Le Bret. You are sad

No more?

Cyrano. At least, she knows that I exist.

Le Bret. And now you will be calm?

Cyrano [*beside himself*]. And now—and now—

I shall be full of frenzy and of thunders!

I want a regiment to put to rout!

I've ten hearts; twenty arms; 't is not enough

To hew down dwarfs,—

[*Shouts at the top of his voice.*]—giants are what I want!

For the past moment, shadows of ACTORS *and* ACTRESSES *have been moving about on the stage in the background and whispering; the rehearsal begins. The* VIOLINS *have resumed their places.*

A Voice [*from the stage*]. Eh! down there! quiet! this is a rehearsal!

Cyrano [*smiling*]. We go!

He starts to withdraw; by the great door in the background enter CUIGY, BRISSAILLE, *and several* OFFICERS, *who are holding up* LIGNIÈRE, *now very drunk*

Cuigy. Cyrano!

Cyrano. What?

Cuigy. A heavy load

We bring you.

Cyrano [*recognizing him*]. Lignière —what has happened to you?

Cuigy. He's looking for you!
Brissaille. He cannot go home!
Cyrano. Why?
Lignière [*with a thick voice, showing him a crumpled note*]. This letter warns me—a hundred men against me—
Because—my song—great danger threatens me—
The Porte de Nesle—I pass it on my way—
Let me go with you—sleep under your roof!
Cyrano. You said a hundred. You shall sleep at home!
Lignière [*alarmed*]. But—
Cyrano [*with a terrible voice, showing him the lighted lantern, which the* DOORKEEPER *swings, while he listens with curiosity to the conversation*]. Take this lantern!—
[LIGNIÈRE *hurriedly seizes the lantern*]. March! I swear to you
That it is I shall shelter you to-night!
—[*To the* OFFICERS.] Follow, but hold your distance,—be my seconds!
Cuigy. A hundred men—
Cyrano. To-night I want no less!
The ACTORS *and* ACTRESSES *who have come down from the stage approach in their various costumes.*
Le Bret. But why should you protect—
Cyrano. Hear Le Bret scold!
Le Bret. —This common drunkard?
Cyrano [*tapping* LIGNIÈRE *on the shoulder*]. Just because this drunkard,
This tun of muscatel, this cask of brandy,
One day performed a wholly charming deed;
For as he left the mass, seeing his sweetheart,
After the custom, take the holy water,—
Though he flees water,—hastened to the font,
Leaned over it, and straightway drank it all!
An Actress [*in soubrette costume*]. Now that was fine!
Cyrano. And was it not, my dear?
The Actress [*to the others*]. But why are there a hundred 'gainst one poet?
Cyrano. Forward!—
[*To the* OFFICERS]. And you, sirs, when you see me charge,
Give me no help, whatever be the danger.
Another Actress [*jumping down from the stage*]. Oh, I am coming!—
Cyrano. Come—
Another [*also jumping down, to an old actor*]. And you, Cassandra?
Cyrano. Come all, Leander, Isabelle, the Doctor,—
All! You shall join, oh pleasant madcap throng,
Italian farce unto this Spanish drama,
And o'er its thunder jingling antic noise
Hang bells around it, like a tambourine!
All the Women [*jumping with joy*]. Bravo! A cape! A cloak, quick!
Jodelet. Come along!
Cyrano [*to the* VIOLINS]. Now, Violins, you'll play a tune for us!
[*The* VIOLINS *join the parade which is forming. Lighted candles are taken from the footlights and distributed. It becomes a torchlight procession.*]
Bravo! Women in costume, officers,
And twenty paces to the front—
[*Takes his place as he speaks.*] —myself

Alone, beneath the plume by glory placed,
Full proud as Scipio three times Nasica!
'T is understood? No one to lend a hand!
Ready? One, two, three! Porter, clear the way!
[*The* DOORKEEPER *opens both leaves of the door. A picturesque moonlit corner of old Paris appears.*]
Ah! Paris seems almost dissolved in haze:
The moonlight falls over the slanting roofs;
A charming frame makes ready for the scene.
There, 'neath its wreathing mists, the river Seine,
Like a mysterious and magic mirror,
Shimmers,—and you shall see what you shall see.
All. On to the Porte de Nesle!
Cyrano [*standing on the threshold*]. The Porte de Nesle!
[*Turning, before going out, to the* SOUBRETTE.]
Did you not ask me why, mademoiselle,
Against one poet five-score men are set?
[*Draws his sword and concludes placidly.*]
Because 't is known he is a friend of mine.
[*He goes out. The procession*—LIGNIÈRE *zigzagging at the head, then the* ACTRESSES, *taking the Officers' arms, then the* ACTORS *frolicking—starts on its midnight march to the music of the* VIOLINS, *and the flaming light of the candles*

CURTAIN.

SECOND ACT

THE POET'S COOK-SHOP

The shop of RAGUENEAU, *baker and pastry-cook, a large establishment at the corner of the Rue Saint-Honoré and the Rue de l'Arbre Sec, a general view of which, gray in the first light of dawn, is seen in the background through the glass panels of the door. To the left, first entrance, there is a counter, and over it a wrought-iron canopy, to which are hung white peacocks, ducks, and geese. In great china vases there are tall bouquets of common flowers, principally yellow sunflowers. On the same side, second entrance, there is a huge fireplace, in front of which, between large andirons, each of which supports a little saucepan, the roasts are dripping into pans. To the right, at the first entrance, a door. At the second entrance a staircase leading to a small room in a sort of loft, the interior of the room being visible through open blinds; a table is set there, lit by a little Flemish candlestick; it is a kind of private dining-room. A wooden gallery, extending from the head of the stairs, seems to lead to other similar small rooms. In the middle of the cook-shop an iron ring, which may be lowered by means of a cord, and upon which heads of large game are hanging, makes a sort of chandelier. The ovens, in the shadow under the staircase, are glowing. The coppers glisten. The spits are turning. There are great piles of fancy dishes all around. Hams hang from their hooks. It is the morning baking. There is a bustle of frightened scullions, tall cooks, and little knife-boys. Their caps bristle*

with chicken feathers or guinea fowls' wings. Rows of cream puffs and collections of fancy cakes are brought in on iron trays and wicker stands. Some of the tables are covered with cakes and other dishes. Others are surrounded with chairs, waiting for customers. A smaller table, in one corner, is hidden under a mass of papers. When the curtain rises RAGUENEAU *is seated there, writing.*

SCENE I

RAGUENEAU, *the* PASTRY-COOKS, *afterwards* LISE. RAGUENEAU, *at the little table, is writing with an inspired air, and counting on his fingers.*

First Pastry-cook [*with a plate*]. Puff paste!

Second Pastry-cook [*with a dish*]. And candied fruits!

Third Pastry-cook [*with a roast decorated with feathers*]. A peacock!

Fourth Pastry-cook [*with a plate of cakes*]. Sweetmeats!

Fifth Pastry-cook [*with a sort of pan*]. Fillet of beef with sauce!

Ragueneau [*stopping his writing and raising his head*]. The silver light
Of dawn already glistens on the coppers!
Smother the god that sings in thee, Ragueneau!
The lute's hour comes—this is the hour of ovens!
[*Gets up,—to a cook.*]
Lengthen this sauce for me, it is too short.

The Cook. How much?

Ragueneau. Three feet.

Passes on.

First Pastry-cook. The patty!

Second Pastry-cook. And the tart!

Ragueneau [*in front of the fireplace*]. Depart, my muse, for fear thy charming eyes
Should be made red by all this faggot smoke!
[*To a pastry-cook, showing him some loaves of bread.*]
You've split these loaves quite wrong, for in the middle
Goes the cæsura—between the hemistiches!
[*To another, showing him an unfinished pasty.*]
You need a roof upon this pie-crust palace—
[*To a young apprentice seated on the ground, who is putting fowls on a spit.*]
And you upon this endless spit should put
The modest chicken, and the turkey proud,
Alternately, my son, as old Malherbe
Arranged the long lines with the shorter ones;
And turn the roasts before the fire in strophes.

Another Apprentice [*coming forward with a platter covered with a napkin*]. Master, with thought of you I have prepared
This, which I hope will please you.

Uncovers the platter, and shows a great lyre of pastry.

Ragueneau [*dazzled*]. Ah! A lyre!

The Apprentice. 'T is made of puff paste.

Ragueneau [*with emotion*]. And with candied fruits!

The Apprentice. And look! the strings are made all of spun sugar.

Ragueneau [*giving him money*]. Go, drink my health!

[*Seeing* LISE *coming in.*] Hush, there's my wife! Make off!

And hide this money!

[*To* LISE, *with an air of annoyance, showing her the lyre.*] Is't not fine?

Lise. Absurd!

Puts a pile of paper bags on the counter.

Ragueneau. Bags? Good—I thank you.

[*Looks at them.*] Heavens! My honored books—

The verses of my friends! Torn! Cut to pieces!

To make up bags wherein to carry biscuits—

Ah! Orpheus and the Mænads you repeat!

Lise [*drily*]. And have I not the right to put to use

The only thing they ever leave for payment—

Your wretched scribblers of uneven lines?

Ragueneau. Ant!—do not thus insult divine grasshoppers.

Lise. My dear, before these folk became your friends

You did not call me Mænad—nor yet ant!

Ragueneau. To do such things to poetry!

Lise. Naught else!

Ragueneau. What would you then have done had it been prose?

SCENE II

The Same, and TWO CHILDREN *who have just come into the Shop.*

Ragueneau. What do you wish, my dears?

First Child. Three patties, please.

Ragueneau [*waiting on them*]. There, nicely done,—and hot.

Second Child. And, if you please, Wrap them up for us.

Ragueneau [*aside*]. Ah! One of my bags!

[*To the children.*] Wrap them up for you? Certainly, my dears.

[*Takes a bag, and just as he is putting the patties into it, reads:*]

"*Ulysses, when he left Penelope*"—

Not that one!

[*Puts it aside and takes another. Just as he is putting the patties in, reads:*] "*Bright-haired Phœbus*" —Nor yet that!

Same action.

Lise [*with impatience*]. Well? What is keeping you?

Ragueneau. There! There you are!

[*Takes a third, and resigns himself to his fate.*]

The sonnet unto Phyllis! It is hard!

Lise. I'm glad he has decided.

[*Shrugging her shoulders.*] Nicodemus!

Stands on a chair and sets about arranging dishes on a high sideboard.

Ragueneau [*taking advantage of the fact that she has turned her back, calls back the children, already at the door*]. Pst, children! Give me back the lines to Phyllis

And I will give six patties for your three.

[*The children give the bag back to him, snatch the cakes, and run off.* RAGUENEAU, *smoothing out the paper, begins to declaim as he reads.*]

"*Phyllis!*" On this sweet name a spot of butter—

"*Phyllis!*"

CYRANO *enters hurriedly*

Scene III

RAGUENEAU, LISE, CYRANO, *afterwards the* MUSKETEER.

Cyrano. What time is it?
Ragueneau [*bowing to him ceremoniously*]. Six.
Cyrano [*with emotion*]. In an hour!
Walks to and fro in the shop.
Ragueneau [*following him*]. Bravo! I saw—
Cyrano. Well, what?
Ragueneau. Your fight!
Cyrano. Which one?
Ragueneau. At the Hôtel de Bourgogne!
Cyrano [*disdainfully*]. Oh, the duel!
Ragueneau [*admiringly*]. The duel fought in verse!
Lise. He's full of it!
Cyrano. I'm glad to hear it.
Ragueneau [*fencing with a spit he has caught up*]. "*I shall thrust when I end the refrain!*"
Ah, how fine it was!
"*I shall thrust when I end the refrain.*"
[*With growing enthusiasm.*]
"*I shall thrust when I end*"—
Cyrano. What time is it?
Ragueneau [*stopping his fencing while he looks at the clock*]. Five minutes after!—"*the refrain.*"
[*Straightens up.*] A ballade!
To think of writing one!
Lise [*to* CYRANO *who has absentmindedly shaken her hand as he passed her desk*]. You've hurt your hand?
Cyrano. Nothing. A little cut.
Ragueneau. You were in danger?
Cyrano. No, none at all.
Lise [*shaking her finger at him*]. I think that you are lying!
Cyrano. And think you that would set my nose a-tremble?
'T would have to be a most tremendous lie!
[*Changing his tone.*]
I wait for some one here. If not in vain,
You will leave us alone.
Ragueneau. But that I cannot.
My poets soon will come—
Lise [*ironically*]. For their first meal.
Cyrano. You'll get them hence when I shall give the signal.
The time?
Ragueneau. Ten minutes past.
Cyrano [*nervously sitting down at Ragueneau's table, and taking a sheet of paper*]. A pen?
Ragueneau [*offering him the one at his ear*]. A swan's quill!
A Musketeer [*with tremendous moustache, and speaking in stentorian tones, enters*]. Greeting!
LISE *goes quickly to meet him.*
Cyrano [*turning*]. Who's that?
Ragueneau. A great friend of my wife's.
A terrible warrior,—by what he says!
Cyrano [*taking the pen again and motioning to* RAGUENEAU *to withdraw*]. Hush! Write,—seal—
[*aside*] —give it to her—and escape.
[*Throwing away the pen.*]
Coward! May I be hanged if I have courage
To speak to her a single word,—
[*To* RAGUENEAU.] The time?
Ragueneau. A quarter past.
Cyrano [*tapping his chest*]. Of those that I have here!
While if I write—
[*Takes up the pen.*] Oh! well, then! let us write it!
The letter I have thought out to myself

A hundred times, so that it now is ready;
And if I put my soul beside the paper
I shall need only to recopy it.
Writes. Behind the glass doors, thin and hesitating figures are seen moving.

Scene IV

RAGUENEAU, LISE, *the* MUSKETEER. CYRANO, *writing at a little table. The* POETS, *dressed in black, with stockings slipping down and covered with mud.*

Lise [*entering, to* RAGUENEAU]. Here are your scarecrows!
First Poet [*entering, to* RAGUENEAU]. Colleague!
Second Poet [*same action, shaking his hand.*] Honored colleague!
Third Poet. Eagle of pastry-cooks! [*Sniffs.*] It smells good here.
Fourth Poet. Phœbus of bakers!
Fifth Poet. Apollo of the oven!
Ragueneau [*surrounded, embraced, shaken by the hand*]. How speedily one feels at ease with them!
First Poet. The crowd, collected at the Porte de Nesle,
Delayed us.
Second Poet. Eight cut-purses, all a-bleeding
With gaping sword-wounds, lay about the pavement!
Cyrano [*lifting his head a moment*]. Eight? It was seven, I thought.
Returns to his letter.
Ragueneau [*to* CYRANO]. Do you then know
The hero of the battle?
Cyrano [*carelessly*]. I? No!
Lise [*to the* MUSKETEER]. And you?
The Musketeer [*twisting his moustache*]. Perhaps!
Cyrano [*still writing, is heard from time to time to murmur a word aside*]. *I love you!*
First Poet. They say one man alone
Put a whole band to rout!
Second Poet. A curious sight!
The ground was strewn with cudgels and with pikes!
Cyrano [*writing*]. *Your eyes—*
Third Poet. To the Goldsmith's Quay the hats were strewn!
First Poet. He must have been a savage one!
Cyrano [*same action*]. *Your lips—*
First Poet. A giant terrible, who wrought these deeds!
Cyrano [*same action*]. *And yet I faint with fear when I perceive you.*
Second Poet [*snatching a cake*]. What verses have you written, Ragueneau, lately?
Cyrano [*same action*]. *Who love you—*
[*Stops just as he is about to sign the letter, and gets up, putting it in his doublet.*]
Signing's needless, I shall give it
To her myself.
Ragueneau [*to the* SECOND POET]. A recipe in verse.
Third Poet [*taking his place near a platter of puffs*]. Give us the poem!
Fourth Poet [*looking at a cake he has taken*]. This cake has put on
Its cap wrong-side before.
Bites off the top.
First Poet. This spice cake follows
The starveling rhymester, with its almond eyes,
And candy eyebrows!
Takes the piece of spice-cake.
Second Poet. We are listening.

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Ragueneau tells his recipe for cream tarts

Third Poet [*squeezing a cream-puff softly between his fingers*]. This cream puff's running over. It is laughing.

Second Poet [*biting at the great lyre of pastry itself*]. For the first time the Lyre gives me food!

Ragueneau [*after getting ready to recite, coughing, settling his cap, and striking an attitude*]. A recipe in verse—

Second Poet [*to the first, nudging him*]. Breakfast?

First Poet [*to the second*]. No, dinner!

Ragueneau. How to make almond cream tarts:

Beat some eggs till they be light,
And frothy quite;
Then, when light enough they seem,
From a lemon squeeze the juice
For your use,
Then mix in sweet almond cream.

Next with puff-paste, light as air,
With great care
Line your moulds up to the top;
With skilled fingers shape the paste
To your taste,
Pour the cream in drop by drop.

When filled with this frothy mass,
Let them pass
To the oven, till they seem
Brown enough, and you will see
Merrily
Emerge the tarts of almond cream.

The Poets [*their mouths full*]. Charming! Delicious!

A Poet [*choking*]. Humph!

[*They retire into the background, still eating*

Cyrano [*who has watched them, goes toward* RAGUENEAU]. Soothed by your voice,
Do you not see the way they stuff themselves?

Ragueneau [*smiling, in a lower voice*]. I see—but do not look, lest it should pain them;
And, so to speak, my verses give to me
A double pleasure, since I satisfy
An amiable weakness of my own,
The while I feed those who might hungry go!

Cyrano [*tapping him on the shoulder*]. I like you.

[RAGUENEAU *rejoins his friends,* CYRANO *follows him with his eyes, and then speaking rather sharply.*] Lise, come here!

Lise [*in tender discourse with the* MUSKETEER, *gives a start, and comes towards* CYRANO]. This warrior bold
Besieges you?

Lise [*offended*]. My eyes, with haughty glance,
Know how to conquer any lover rash
Who would assail my virtue.

Cyrano. Eugh! your eyes,
For conquerors, seem of a yielding spirit.

Lise [*choking*]. But—

Cyrano [*sharply*]. Ragueneau's my friend, Dame Lise, and so
I will not see him made a laughing-stock.

Lise. But—

Cyrano [*raising his voice so that the* MUSKETEER *may hear him*]. To the wise a word—

Bows to the MUSKETEER, *and takes a post of observation at the door in the background, after having looked at the clock.*

Lise [*to the* MUSKETEER, *who has merely returned Cyrano's bow*]. I wonder at you!
Answer him—on his nose—

The Musketeer. On his nose, no!

[*Withdraws quickly,* LISE *follows him*

Cyrano [*from the door in the background, motioning to* RAGUENEAU *to get the* POETS *out of the way*]. Pst!—

Ragueneau [*showing the* POETS *the door on the right*]. We shall find it better—

Cyrano [*growing impatient*]. Pst!—

Ragueneau [*pulling them along*]. To read

Poetry—

First Poet [*in despair, with his mouth full*]. But the cakes!

Second Poet. Take them along.

[*They all follow* RAGUENEAU *out in a procession, after a clean sweep of all the cakes*

SCENE V

CYRANO, ROXANE, *the* DUENNA.

Cyrano. I'll use the letter if I think there be

The smallest hope—

[ROXANE *appears behind the glass door, masked and followed by the* DUENNA. CYRANO *opens the door quickly.*] Come in!

[*Walking up to the* DUENNA]. A word with you!

The Duenna. Two.

Cyrano. Are you fond of sweets?

The Duenna. To make me sick.

Cyrano [*quickly taking some of the paper bags from the counter*]. Here are two sonnets Benserade has written—

The Duenna. Pooh!

Cyrano. Which I'll fill with wine-cakes.

The Duenna [*changing her expression*]. Oh!

Cyrano. You like

These cream puffs also?

The Duenna. Oh, I dote upon them!

Cyrano. Six of them I will put within the bosom

Of a poem by Saint-Amant! In these verses

Of Chapelain, I'll put a piece of sponge cake,—

You like fresh cakes, then?

The Duenna. Oh! I love them madly!

Cyrano [*filling her arms with the bags of cakes*]. Be kind enough to eat all these outside.

The Duenna. But—

Cyrano [*pushing her out*]. Come not back till you have finished them!

Closes the door, comes back to ROXANE, *and stops, uncovered, at a respectful distance.*

SCENE VI

CYRANO, ROXANE; *for a moment, the* DUENNA.

Cyrano. Now let this moment be most blest of all,

When, ceasing to forget I humbly breathe,

You come to say to me—to say to me—

Roxane [*after having unmasked*]. To thank you first, because the knavish dolt

Whom you put to the laugh, with your good sword,

Is he whom a great lord—in love with me—

Cyrano. De Guiche!

Roxane [*lowering her eyes*] —has tried to give me—for a husband.

Cyrano. So-called?

[*Bowing.*] Then I have fought, and better so,

For your bright eyes, not for my ugly nose.

Roxane. And then—I wished—but to make this avowal

I needs must see in you the—almost brother,

With whom I played, in the park, by the lake!

Cyrano. Yes; you came every year to Bergerac.

Roxane. The reeds then furnished you with wood for swords.

Cyrano. And the corn, yellow hair to deck your dolls.

Roxane. Those were the days of games—

Cyrano. —of berry-picking—

Roxane. The days when you did all things that I wished!

Cyrano. Roxane, in dresses short, was called Madeleine.

Roxane. And I was pretty then?

Cyrano. You were not ugly.

Roxane. Sometimes, when you had cut your hand in climbing

You ran to me; then I would play the mother,

And say with voice that tried hard to be stern

[*Takes his hand.*]

"What is this scratch now?"

[*Stops in amazement.*] Ah, too bad! And this?

[CYRANO *tries to draw back his hand.*]

No! Show it to me! What? At your age, still?

How came it?

Cyrano. Playing, at the Porte de Nesle.

Roxane [*sitting at a table and dipping her handkerchief in a glass of water*]. Come!

Cyrano [*also sitting down*]. Like a fond and happy little mother!

Roxane. And tell me, while I wipe away the blood,

How many were there?

Cyrano. Oh! Not quite a hundred.

Roxane. Tell me!

Cyrano. No, let it go! But you tell me

That which just now you dared not—

Roxane [*without letting go of his hand*]. Now I dare.

The past's sweet odor gives me courage new.

Yes, now I dare. Listen, I love someone.

Cyrano. Ah!

Roxane. Who has not guessed it!

Cyrano. Ah!

Roxane. At least, not yet.

Cyrano. Ah!

Roxane. But who soon will know, if he knows it not.

Cyrano. Ah!

Roxane. A poor lad, who has loved me until now

Timidly, from afar, nor dared to speak.

Cyrano. Ah!

Roxane. Leave me your hand, it is all feverish!—

But I have seen love trembling on his lips.

Cyrano. Ah!

Roxane [*finishing a little bandage for him made of her handkerchief*]. And do you know, my cousin, that in fact

He now is serving in your regiment!

Cyrano. Ah!

Roxane [*smiling*]. In your own company he's a cadet!

Cyrano. Ah!

Roxane. His forehead shows his genius and his wit,

He's young, proud, noble, brave, and fair—

Cyrano [*getting up, very pale*]. What, fair?

Roxane. Why, what's the matter?

Cyrano. Nothing—'tis—
[*with a smile, showing his hand*]—
this wound.

Roxane. In fine, I love him. I must tell you, too,
That I have seen him only at the play—

Cyrano. You have not spoken?

Roxane. Only with our eyes.

Cyrano. How do you know him then?

Roxane. Under the lindens,
In the Place Royale, there is talk; and gossip
Has told me—

Cyrano. He is a cadet?

Roxane. He is.
He's in the Guards.

Cyrano. His name?

Roxane. The Baron Christian
De Neuvillette—

Cyrano. What? He's not in the Guards.

Roxane. Yes, since this morning, under Captain Carbon
De Castel-Jaloux.

Cyrano. Ah! how quick is love!
But my poor child—

The Duenna [*opening the door in the background*]. Monsieur de Bergerac,
I've finished all the cakes.

Cyrano. Well, read the verses
Upon the bags. [*The* DUENNA *disappears.*] My poor child, you who love
Keen wit and courtly speech, if he should be
A man unlearned, unpolished, in the rough!

Roxane. No, he has hair like one of d'Urfé's heroes!

Cyrano. His speech may lack the grace his hair displays!

Roxane. No, every word he speaks I know is brilliant.

Cyrano. Yes, words are brilliant from a fair moustache;
But if he were a dolt!—

Roxane [*tapping with her foot*]. Then I should die!

Cyrano [*after a pause*]. So you have brought me here to tell me that.
I cannot see the good of it, Madame!

Roxane. Ah! yesterday I had a deadly shock,—
I heard that you are Gascons, every one,
All of your company—

Cyrano. And that we pick
Quarrels with all recruits, who by mere favor
Gain entrance to our ranks of Gascon blood,
And are not Gascons? That is what you heard?

Roxane. Think how I trembled for him!

Cyrano [*between his teeth*]. With good reason!

Roxane. But yesterday when you appeared to us
So mighty and so brave, holding your own
Against the rabble, punishing that knave,
I thought—if he but would, whom all men fear—

Cyrano. 'Tis well, I will protect your little baron.

Roxane. Ah, then you will protect him well for me?
I've always had so warm a friendship for you!

Cyrano. Yes, yes.
Roxane. You'll be his friend?
Cyrano. I'll be his friend.
Roxane. And he shall fight no duels?
Cyrano. On my oath!
Roxane. I am so fond of you! Now I must go.
[*Quickly puts on her mask, and a bit of lace over her head, and absent-mindedly.*]
But you have not yet told me of the battle
Last night. It must have been a mighty feat—
Tell him to write.
[*Throws him a little kiss with her fingers.*] I am so fond of you!
Cyrano. Yes, yes.
Roxane. Five score against you? Well, good-by,
We are great friends?
Cyrano. Yes, yes.
Roxane. Tell him to write.
A hundred! You will tell me later. Now
I cannot stay. A hundred! Oh! what courage!
Cyrano [*bowing to her*]. I have done better since.
[*Exit* ROXANE. CYRANO *remains motionless, his eyes fixed on the ground. Silence for a time. The door on the right opens and Ragueneau's head appears*

SCENE VII

CYRANO, RAGUENEAU, *the* POETS, CARBON DE CASTEL-JALOUX, *the* CADETS, *the* CROWD, *etc., afterwards* DE GUICHE.

Ragueneau. May we come back?
Cyrano [*without moving*]. Yes.
RAGUENEAU *gives the signal and his friends come back. At the same time, at the door in the background,* CARBON DE CASTEL-JALOUX *appears, in his uniform as Captain of the Guards, making sweeping gestures as he perceives* CYRANO
Carbon de Castel-Jaloux. There he is now!
Cyrano [*raising his head*]. Captain!
Carbon [*in exultation*]. Our hero!
We know the story! Thirty of my men
Are waiting—
Cyrano [*drawing back*]. But—
Carbon [*trying to draw him along*]. Come now! They wish to see you.
Cyrano. No!
Carbon. They're drinking at the tavern opposite.
Cyrano. I—
Carbon [*going back to the door, and calling behind the scenes in a thundering voice*]. He refuses. He's in an ill humor!
A Voice [*without*]. Ah, by the Lord!
A tumult without, noise of swords and spurs approaching.
Carbon. You hear them cross the street!
The CADETS *enter the cook-shop with a chorus of Gascon oaths and exclamations.*
Ragueneau [*drawing back in alarm*]. Gentlemen, are you all from Gascony?
The Cadets. All!
A Cadet [*to* CYRANO]. Bravo!
Cyrano. Baron!
Another [*shaking his hands*]. Hurrah!
Cyrano. Baron!
Third Cadet [*embracing him*]. Greeting!

Cyrano. Baron!

Several Cadets. Embrace him!

Cyrano [*not knowing whom to answer*]. Baron! baron! spare me!

Ragueneau. Gentlemen, is each one of you a baron?

The Cadets. All!

Ragueneau. Are they?

First Cadet. Just our crests would build a tower!

Le Bret [*entering and running towards* CYRANO]. A crowd, led by your escort of last night,
Is looking for you madly everywhere!

Cyrano [*in alarm*]. You did not tell them where I am?

Le Bret [*rubbing his hands*]. I did!

A Tradesman [*entering, followed by a crowd*]. Monsieur, the whole Marais is coming hither!

The street outside is full of people. Carriages and sedan chairs block the way.

Le Bret [*aside, with a smile, to* CYRANO]. And Roxane?

Cyrano [*brusquely*]. Hush!

The Crowd [*shouting without*]. Cyrano!

A mob bursts into the cook-shop. Confusion and shouting.

Ragueneau [*standing on a table*]. In they swarm!
They're breaking everything! 'T is glorious!

People [*surrounding* CYRANO]. My friend! My friend!

Cyrano. I had not yesterday
So many friends!

Le Bret [*delighted*]. Success!

A Little Marquis [*running up with outstretched hands*]. If thou didst know—

Cyrano. If thou?—if thou?—Now what have we in common?

Another Marquis. Monsieur, may I present you to some ladies
Who are waiting in my carriage?

Cyrano [*coldly*]. Who will first
Present you to me?

Le Bret [*in amazement*]. What's the matter?

Cyrano. Hush!

A Man of Letters [*with a writing case*]. May I have the details?—

Cyrano. No!

Le Bret [*nudging him*]. The inventor
Of the "Gazette"—Théophraste Renaudot!

Cyrano. No matter!

Le Bret. 'T is the sheet that tells so much.
They say this new idea has a great future.

A Poet [*coming forward*]. Monsieur—

Cyrano. Another!

The Poet. I should like to make
A pentacrostic on your name—

A Man [*also advancing*]. Monsieur—

Cyrano. Enough!

A movement in the crowd. People take their places. DE GUICHE *appears, escorted by* OFFICERS. *Enter* CUIGY, BRISSAILLE, *and the other* OFFICERS *who started with* CYRANO *at the end of the First Act.* CUIGY *approaches* CYRANO *rapidly*

Cuigy [*to* CYRANO]. Monsieur de Guiche!

[*Murmuring. All take position.*] He represents
Marshal de Gassion!

De Guiche [*bowing to* CYRANO]. Who sends to you
His compliments upon your latest feat,
The news of which has reached him.

The Crowd. Bravo! Bravo!

Cyrano [*with a bow*]. The Marshal
is expert in daring deeds.
De Guiche. He would have dis-
believed, save on the oath
Of these who saw it.
Cuigy. With our very eyes!
Le Bret [*aside to* CYRANO, *who seems absent-minded*]. But—
Cyrano. Hush!
Le Bret. You seem in pain!
Cyrano [*with a start, and quickly drawing himself up*]. Before this
crowd?
[*His moustache bristles; he throws out his chest.*] I seem in pain?—
You'll see!
De Guiche [*to whom* CUIGY *has been whispering*]. Your life already
Is full of doughty deeds. With these
mad Gascons
You're serving, are you not?
Cyrano. With the Cadets.
A Cadet [*with stentorian voice*]. With
us!
De Guiche [*looking at the Gascons, standing in line behind* CYRANO].
Ah! Ah! All these, of lordly mien,
Are then the famous—
Carbon de Castel-Jaloux. Cyrano!
Cyrano. What, captain?
Carbon. Since now my company
has filled its roster,
Present it to the Count in all due
form.
Cyrano [*advancing two paces towards* DE GUICHE *and indicating the* CADETS].

These be cadets of Gascony,
Carbon de Castel-Jaloux's men:
They fight, they lie full shamelessly,
These be cadets of Gascony!
Their talk is all of heraldry—
Nobler are they than highwaymen;
These be cadets of Gascony,
Carbon de Castel-Jaloux's men.

With stork's long leg and eagle's eye,
And cat's moustache and wolf's keen fangs,
Thrusting the growling rabble by,
With stork's long leg and eagle's eye,
They march, hats cocked on heads held high,—
The holes hid, where the feather hangs,—
With stork's long leg and eagle's eye,
And cat's moustache and wolf's keen fangs!

Friends Belly-thrust and Break-your-pate,
Such are their nicknames soft and sweet;
On glory they're intoxicate!
Friends Belly-thrust and Break-your-pate.
Where quarrels start at fastest rate,
These are the places where they meet.
Friends Belly-thrust and Break-your-pate.
Such are their nicknames soft and sweet!

See the cadets of Gascony,
Who plant horns on the husband's brow!
Oh, woman, loved so tenderly,
See the cadets of Gascony!
Let husbands old frown angrily,
Let cuckoos sing from every bough!
See the cadets of Gascony,
Who plant horns on the husband's brow!

De Guiche [*carelessly seated in an armchair which* RAGUENEAU *has quickly brought him*]. A poet is a
modern luxury,
Will you belong to me?
Cyrano. No, sir, to no one.
De Guiche. Your dash amused my
uncle Richelieu
Yesterday. I would help you with
him.
Le Bret [*dazzled*]. Lord!
De Guiche. I take it you have done
a play in verse!
Le Bret [*whispering to* CYRANO]. You'll get your "Agrippina" played, my friend.
De Guiche. Take it to him.
Cyrano [*tempted and rather pleased*]. Well—
De Guiche. He is most expert.
He'll only change a line or two of
yours!

Cyrano [*whose face has immediately flushed*]. Impossible, Monsieur; my blood runs cold,
To think of changing even one small comma.
De Guiche. But when he likes a verse, my friend, he pays,
And pays right dear.
Cyrano. He pays for it less dear
Than I do, when I've made a verse I like;
I pay for it, singing it to myself.
De Guiche. You're proud.
Cyrano. Ah! really, you have noticed it?
A Cadet [*entering with a collection of shabby hats spitted on his sword, their plumes bedraggled and holes through the brims*]. Look, Cyrano! this morning on the quay,
What strangely feathered game we gathered in;
The hats left in the rout—
Carbon. The spoils of war!
Every One [*laughing*]. Ha! ha!
Cuigy. Whoever set this band of cut-throats
Is in a rage to-day.
Brissaille. Is it known who?
De Guiche. 'Twas I! [*The laughter ceases.*]
I charged them to chastise—a task
One does not do one's self—a drunken rhymester.
A constrained silence.
The Cadet [*in an undertone to* CYRANO, *showing him the hats*]. What shall we make of them? A stew? They're greasy.
Cyrano [*taking the sword upon which they are impaled, salutes, and lets them all slip off at De Guiche's feet*]. Monsieur, will you return them to your friends?
De Guiche [*rising, in a peremptory tone*]. My bearers and my chair, at once,—I go.
[*To* CYRANO *angrily.*]
You, sir!—
A Voice [*in the street, shouting*]. The bearers of my lord the Comte de Guiche!
De Guiche [*regaining his self-control, with a smile*]. Have you read "Don Quixote"?
Cyrano. Yes,
And at this crack-brain's name I doff my hat.
De Guiche. Bethink yourself upon—
A Bearer [*appearing in the background*]. The chair is here.
De Guiche. The chapter of the windmills!
Cyrano [*bowing*]. The thirteenth.
De Guiche. When one attacks them, it will oft befall—
Cyrano. Then I attack folk turned by every wind?
De Guiche. That while their sails in circles sweep about
They'll land you in the mud!
Cyrano. Or in the stars!
[*Exit* DE GUICHE. *He is seen getting into his chair. The gentlemen of his escort withdraw whispering together.* LE BRET *accompanies them to the door. The crowd departs*

SCENE VIII

CYRANO, LE BRET, *the* CADETS, *the latter seated at Tables to the Right and Left, and being served with Food and Drink.*

Cyrano [*bowing to them mockingly as they go out without daring to bow to him*]. Gentlemen! Gentlemen—

Le Bret [*returning in despair, throwing up his arms*]. What a misfortune!
Cyrano. Oh, you! you'll scold!
Le Bret. You surely must admit
Murdering every passing chance be comes
Exaggerated.
Cyrano. Well, I exaggerate.
Le Bret [*in triumph*]. Ah!
Cyrano. But upon principle, and as a practice,
I find it well thus to exaggerate.
Le Bret. If you would lay aside your guardsman's spirit,
Fortune and glory—
Cyrano. And what must I do?
Seek some protector strong, get me a patron,
And like some humble vine, that twines a trunk,
Upheld by it, the while it strips its bark,
Climb by mere artifice, not rise by strength?
No, thank you. Dedicate, as others do,
Verses to bankers? Make myself a clown
In hopes of seeing on a statesman's lips
A friendly smile appear? I thank you, no!
Shall I be a toad-eater all my days?
My waist worn out by bending, and my skin
Grown quickly soiled in the region of my knees?
Or shall I show how limber is my back?—
No, thank you! On both shoulders carry water,
And sit the fence a-straddle, while I flatter
Each to his face, and feather my own nest?
No, thank you! Raise myself from step to step,
Become the little great man of a clique,
And steer my boat, with madrigals for oars,
And sighs of ancient dames to fill my sails?
No, thank you! Pay the editor De Sercy,
For publishing my poems? No, I thank you!
Or shall I have myself proclaimed as pope
By councils held in drinking-shops by fools?
No, thank you! Shall I make a reputation
Upon one sonnet, rather than write others?
Find talent only in the commonplace?
Be constantly in fear of errant sheets,
And always say: "Oh, let my name be seen
Upon the pages of the 'Mercure François'?"
No, thank you! Plan, be pale, and be afraid,
And make a call rather than write a poem,
Prepare petitions, have myself presented?
No, thank you! No, I thank you! No!
But—sing,
Dream, laugh, and go about, alone and free,
Have eyes that see things clear, and voice that rings,
And, if you like, wear your hat wrong side front;
Fight for a yes or no—or make a poem;
Work without thought of fortune or of glory;

Fly to the moon in fancy, if you wish!
Write not a word that comes not from your heart,
And still be modest; tell yourself, "My child,
Content yourself with flowers and fruits,—with leaves,—
If you have gathered them in your own garden!"
Then, if by chance you gain some small success,
No tribute money need you pay to Cæsar,
And all the honor is your very own.
In short, scorning to be the clinging vine,
When you are neither oak nor linden tree,
Mount not so high perhaps, but all alone!

Le Bret. Alone, so be it! But not one against all!
How did you get this mad idea of yours
Of making enemies where'er you go?

Cyrano. From seeing you making so many friends,
And smiling at these crowds of friends you make
With lips pursed up and wrinkled! I prefer
To have few bows to make when I go forth,
And gladly shout, "Another enemy!"

Le Bret. But this is madness!

Cyrano. Well, yes, 't is my weakness.
To displease is my pleasure. Hate I love.
My friend, if you but knew how light one walks
Under the fusillade of hostile eyes;
What pleasant little spots upon one's doublet
Are made by envy's gall and cowards' spittle!—
But the soft friendship you wrap round yourself
Is like those great Italian collars, floating,
And made of openwork, in which one's neck
Grows soft like to a woman's: wearing them
One feels at ease—but holds his head less high;
For, having neither order nor support,
It weakly rolls about on every side.
While, as for me, Hate sheathes me every day,
Gives me a ruff that holds my head erect.
Every new enemy is another pleat,
A new constraint, and one more ray of glory,
For, like in all points to the Spanish ruff,
Hate is at once a collar and a halo!

Le Bret [*after a pause, putting his arm through Cyrano's*]. Be proud and bitter to the world, but softly
Tell me quite simply that she loves thee not.

Cyrano [*sharply*]. Hush!

After a moment CHRISTIAN *enters and joins the* CADETS. *They do not speak to him; at last he sits down at a small table, where* LISE *waits on him*

SCENE IX

CYRANO, LE BRET, *the* CADETS, CHRISTIAN DE NEUVILLETTE.

A Cadet [*seated at a table in the background, glass in hand*]. Cyrano!
[CYRANO *turns.*] The story?

Cyrano. In a moment.

[*Withdraws on Le Bret's arm. They talk in undertones*

The Cadet [*rising and coming forward*]. The story of the fight! 'T will be a lesson—

[*Stops before the table where* CHRISTIAN *is seated.*]

—For this untried recruit.

Christian [*raising his head*]. Untried recruit?

Another Cadet. Yes, northern weakling!

Christian. Weakling, did you say?

First Cadet [*mockingly*]. Monsieur de Neuvillette, learn this one thing:

There is one object which we do not mention
More than the rope in the household of one hanged.

Christian. And what is that?

Another Cadet [*in an impressive voice*]. Behold me!

[*Mysteriously touches his finger to his nose three times.*] Understand?

Christian. Ah! 't is the—

Another. Hush—that word is never uttered!

[*Indicates* CYRANO, *who is talking with* LE BRET *in the background.*]

Or 't is with him there you will have to do.

Another [*who has silently sat down on the table behind him, while he has been turning to face the others*]. Two men he slew because he liked it not
That they talked through their noses.

Another [*rising from under the table where he has crawled on all fours, in a hollow voice*]. And one cannot
Without departing, cut off in his youth,
Make one allusion to the fatal feature!

Another [*laying his hand on his shoulder*]. One word's enough! I said a word?—a gesture!

To draw one's kerchief is to draw one's shroud.

Silence. All around him fold their arms and watch him. He rises and walks towards CARBON DE CASTEL-JALOUX *who is talking with an officer and seems to see nothing.*

Christian. Captain!

Carbon [*turning and looking him over*]. Monsieur?

Christian. What is the thing to do,
When Southrons are too boastful?

Carbon. Prove to them
One can be from the North, and brave.

Turns his back on him.

Christian. I thank you.

First Cadet [*to* CYRANO]. Your story now!

All. His story!

Cyrano [*coming forward towards them*]. What, my story?

[*All draw their benches towards him, and form a group, craning their necks.* CHRISTIAN *straddles a chair.*]

Well: I was marching all alone, to meet them,
The moon shone in the sky like a great watch,
When suddenly some watchmaker, with care,
Starting to draw a piece of cloudy cotton
Across the silver case of this round watch,
The night became the blackest ever seen;
And as there are no lights upon the quays,
Good Lord! you could not see beyond—

Christian. Your nose?

Silence. Every one rises slowly. They look at CYRANO *in terror. He breaks off in amazement. A pause.*

Cyrano. Who is that man there?

A Cadet [*in an undertone*]. He's a man who came
This morning.

Cyrano [*taking a step towards* CHRISTIAN]. Did you say this morning?

Carbon [*in an undertone*]. Named Baron de Neuvil—

Cyrano [*quickly stopping*]. Ah, 'tis well—

[*Turns pale, then red, and makes another movement as if to fling himself upon* CHRISTIAN.] I—

[*Then regains his composure and says in a quiet voice.*] Well—

[*Begins again.*]
As I was saying—

[*With a burst of anger in his voice.*] God—

[*Continues in a natural tone.*] —you could not see.

[*Amazement. They take their seats, watching him.*]
And so I went, thinking that for a beggar
I was about to offend some mighty prince,
Who surely would bear me a bitter grudge;
In short, that rashly and without concern,
I was about to thrust—

Christian. Your nose?

Cyrano. —my fingers
Between the bark and tree, since this great man
Might well be strong enough to deal a blow
Upon—

Christian. Your nose?

Cyrano [*wiping the sweat from his face*]. —upon my meddling fingers.
But then I added: "Gascon, do your duty!
Cyrano, march!" Then, onward in the dark,
I go and feel—

Christian. A fillip on the nose?

Cyrano. I parry. Suddenly I find myself—

Christian. Nose against nose—

Cyrano [*leaping at him*]. Damnation!

[*All the* GASCONS *rush forward to see; when* CYRANO *reaches* CHRISTIAN *he regains his self-control and continues.*] With a hundred
Roistering ruffians, stinking—

Christian. 'Neath your nose—

Cyrano [*pale and smiling*].—With sour wine and onions! Then I rush
Head down—

Christian. Nose on the scent—

Cyrano. And so I charge:
Two I rip up! I run another through!
Then some one lunges—Paf! I answer—

Christian. Pif!

Cyrano [*exploding*]. The devil! Out with you!

All the CADETS *rush towards the doors.*

First Cadet. The tiger wakes!

Cyrano. Every one! With this man leave me alone!

Second Cadet. We'll find him cut in mincemeat!

Ragueneau. What, in mincemeat?

Another Cadet. Filling one of your patties!

Ragueneau. I grow pale
And limp as any napkin.

Carbon. Let us go!

Another. He will not leave a single morsel of him!

Another. I die of fright thinking what will befall!

Another [*closing the door on the right*]. Something most terrible!

[*They all go out, some by the rear, some by the sides, some by the stairway.* CYRANO *and* CHRISTIAN *remain face to face, and look at each other for a moment*

SCENE X

CYRANO, CHRISTIAN.

Cyrano. Give me your hand!

Christian. Monsieur—

Cyrano. Brave man!

Christian. But—

Cyrano. Very brave; I like it!

Christian. But tell me?—

Cyrano. Come, your hand, I am her brother.

Christian. Whose?

Cyrano. Hers!

Christian. What?

Cyrano. Roxane's!

Christian [*rushing to him*]. Heavens! You? Her brother?

Cyrano. Yes; or almost: a cousin like a brother.

Christian. She's told you?—

Cyrano. All!

Christian. She loves me?

Cyrano. That may be.

Christian [*taking his hand*]. Monsieur, I am so happy to have met you!

Cyrano. This is what might be called a sudden friendship.

Christian. Forgive me—

Cyrano [*looking at him and laying his hand on his shoulder*]. True, he is a handsome rascal!

Christian. If you knew, sir, how I admire you.

Cyrano. But all these "noses" which—

Christian. I take them back.

Cyrano. Roxane to-night expects a letter—

Christian. Ah!

Cyrano. What?

Christian. I shall spoil my chances if I speak!

Cyrano. Why?

Christian. I'm so stupid that I die of shame!

Cyrano. No, you are not, since you take count of it,

And your attack on me was not so stupid.

Christian. Bah! Words come quickly when one starts to fight.

Yes, I may have a ready soldier's wit,

But before women I must hold my tongue.

Their eyes smile kindly on me as I pass—

Cyrano. And when you stop, do not their hearts the like?

Christian. No; for I am—I know it, and I tremble—

A man who cannot talk of love.

Cyrano. I think,

Had I been one fashioned more carefully

I could have talked of it among the best.

Christian. Oh, for the power to speak one's thoughts with grace!

Cyrano. To walk about, a handsome musketeer!

Christian. Roxane is learnèd, I shall surely kill

All her illusions!

Cyrano. If I only had

Such an interpreter to speak my soul!

Christian [*in despair*]. I need fair words.
Cyrano [*abruptly*]. And I will lend them to you!
And you lend me your conquering comeliness;
And so combined together let us make
A hero of romance!
Christian. What?
Cyrano. You could learn
To speak the words I'll teach you—
Christian. You suggest?—
Cyrano. Roxane shall never lose her fond illusions!
Together let us win her, say you so?
And shall I breathe in you my very soul,
From my buff jerkin to your broidered doublet?—
Christian. But, Cyrano!—
Cyrano. You will?
Christian. You frighten me!
Cyrano. You fear lest by yourself you chill her heart?
Shall we not join your lips and my fine words?
And very soon you'll fold her in your arms.
Christian. Your eyes are gleaming!
Cyrano. Will you?
Christian. What! Will that
Give you such pleasure?
Cyrano [*with elation*]. That—
[*stopping himself, and in the tone of an artist pleased with his work*]
—that will amuse me.
'Tis an experiment to tempt a poet.
Shall we be each the other's complement?
I shall walk in the shadow by your side,
You will be my good looks and I your wit.
Christian. But I can never write the needed letter
Which must be sent forthwith—
Cyrano [*taking from his doublet the letter he had written.*] There is your letter!
Christian. What?
Cyrano. There is nothing lacking but the name.
Christian. I—
Cyrano. You can send it. Reassure yourself.
It is a good one.
Christian. You—
Cyrano. We always have them
With us: letters to Chloris—in our minds;
For we are such as have for sweethearts only
Dreams breathed into the bubble of a name.
Take it, and change these fancies into facts,—
I shot at random these pleas, these avowals,—
And all these flitting birds you'll bring to perch!
You'll see that in this letter I was—take it!—
As eloquent as I was insincere!
Take it, and end the talk!
Christian. Will not some words
Need to be changed. Written thus at a venture,
Will it fit Roxane?
Cyrano. 'Twill fit her like a glove.
Christian. But—
Cyrano. Self-conceit so well deceives itself,
Roxane will think 'twas written all for her!
Christian. My friend!
Throws himself into CYRANO'S *arms. They stand embracing each other.*

Scene XI

CYRANO, CHRISTIAN, *the* GASCONS, *the* MUSKETEER, LISE.

A Cadet [*partly opening the door*]. No word. The silence of the grave.
I dare not look—
[*Puts his head in.*] What?
All the Cadets [*entering and seeing* CYRANO *and* CHRISTIAN *embracing*]. Ah! Oh!
A Cadet. What is this?
General surprise.
The Musketeer [*mockingly*]. Well?
Carbon. Mild as a saint our demon has become?
Smitten upon one cheek he turns the other?
The Musketeer. Now you may speak to him about his nose.
[*Triumphantly calling* LISE.]
Oh! Lise. You'll see!
[*Pretending to be smelling the air.*]
Oh! Oh! It is surprising!
This odor!
[*Approaching* CYRANO.] Sir, have you not noticed it?
What does it smell of here?
Cyrano [*boxing his ears*]. I think a nosegay!
Rejoicing. The CADETS *find that* CYRANO *is unchanged. They turn somersaults.*

CURTAIN.

THIRD ACT

Roxane's Kiss

A small square in the old Marais, with ancient houses, and a perspective of narrow streets. To the right, Roxane's house, and the wall of its garden, bordered with abundant foliage. Above the door, a window and balcony. A bench before the threshold. Vines climb the wall; jasmine wreathes the balcony and hangs quivering. By means of the bench and stones jutting out from the wall it is easy to climb to the balcony. Opposite, an old house of the same style, of brick and stone, with a door of entrance. The knocker of this door is wrapped with linen like an injured thumb. When the curtain rises the DUENNA *is seated on the bench. The window is wide open on Roxane's balcony.* RAGUENEAU, *dressed in a sort of livery, is standing by the* DUENNA. *He is finishing a narrative, and wiping his eyes.*

Scene I

RAGUENEAU, *the* DUENNA; *then* ROXANE, CYRANO, *and two* PAGES.

Ragueneau. And then she left me for a musketeer!
I was alone and ruined—I hanged myself,
Monsieur de Bergerac came and cut me down,
And offers me to his cousin as a steward.
The Duenna. But how do you explain this plight of yours?
Ragueneau. Lise loved the soldiers; I was fond of poets!
And Mars ate all the cakes Apollo left;
And so—you understand—the end soon came.
The Duenna [*rising and calling towards the open window*]. Roxane, they're waiting for us,—are you ready?
Roxane. I'm putting on my cloak.

The Duenna [*to* RAGUENEAU, *pointing to the door opposite*]. They wait for us
Opposite, at Clomire's. In her retreat
She keeps an exchange for wits. This afternoon
There'll be a discourse on the Tender Passion.

Ragueneau. The Tender Passion?

The Duenna [*simpering*]. Certainly.
[*Calling towards the window.*] Roxane!
You must come down, or we shall miss the discourse
Upon the Tender Passion!

Roxane's Voice. I am coming.

A sound of stringed instruments is heard approaching.

Cyrano's Voice [*singing in the wings*]. La, la! la, la!

The Duenna [*surprised*]. They're playing a piece for us!

Cyrano [*followed by two* PAGES *carrying lutes*]. That note's a demi-semi-quaver, fool!

First Page [*ironically*]. You know what is a demi-semi-quaver?

Cyrano. I'm a musician, like all Gassendi's pupils!

The Page [*playing and singing*]. La, la!

Cyrano [*snatching away the lute and continuing the bar*]. I can go on—La, la! La, la!

Roxane [*appearing on the balcony*]. 'T is you.

Cyrano [*going on with the air, and singing*]. 'T is I—come to salute your lilies,
And to pay my respects unto your roses!

Roxane. I'm coming down [*Leaves the balcony*].

The Duenna [*indicating the* PAGES]. Who are these *virtuosi?*

Cyrano. It is a bet I won from D'Assoucy.
We argued warmly on a point of grammar,
When suddenly he pointed to these giants
Who strike the strings with such a skilful hand,
And always form his escort; saying to me,
"I lay you a day of music"—and he lost!
And now, till Phœbus starts another round,
I have these lutists at my heels all day,
Musical witnesses of all I do.
At first 'twas charming, now I find it palls.
[*To the musicians.*]
Go—play a minuet to Montfleury.
[*The* PAGES *start to go out. To the* DUENNA.]
I came to ask Roxane, as every night—
[*To the* PAGES *as they go out.*]
Play on—and off the key!
[*To the* DUENNA.]—Whether her friend
Is still perfection?

Roxane [*coming out of the house*]. Ah! how fair he is,
And what a mind he has, and how I love him!

Cyrano [*smiling*]. Christian has such a mind?

Roxane. Yes, more than you!

Cyrano. That I admit.

Roxane. I think there could not be
A better framer of those pretty phrases
Which may be naught, and yet are everything.
Sometimes he seems distraught,—his Muse is gone;
Then, all at once, he says such charming things!

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Cyrano and Roxane

Cyrano [*skeptically*]. Really?
Roxane. This is too much.
See what men are!
Because a man has looks, he has no brains!
Cyrano. Can he talk of the heart in clever fashion?
Roxane. He more than talks, he teaches!
Cyrano. Does he write?
Roxane. Yes, even better! Listen to a bit.
[*Declaiming.*]
"*The more you steal my heart, the more I have.*"
[*Triumphantly to* CYRANO.] Well?
Cyrano. Pooh!
Roxane. And this:
"*But since I need another*
To suffer with, if you keep mine yourself,
Send me your own."
Cyrano. Sometimes he has too much;
And sometimes not enough. What does he want?
Roxane. You grate on me! It is the jealousy—
Cyrano [*giving a start*]. What!
Roxane. —of an author that quite eats you up!
And this, the very tenderest of them all:
"*Believe me that my heart makes but one cry*
To you; and that if kisses could be written,
Madame, you'd read my letter with your lips."
Cyrano [*smiling with satisfaction in spite of himself*]. Ha, ha! those lines are,—eh, eh!
[*Stopping himself, and with disdain.*]
—pretty weak!
Roxane. And this—
Cyrano [*delighted*]. You know his letters, then, by heart?
Roxane. All!
Cyrano. There's naught else to say; 'tis flattering!
Roxane. He is a master.
Cyrano [*modestly*]. Oh!—a master!
Roxane [*peremptorily*]. Yes!
A master.
Cyrano. So be it then—a master!
The Duenna [*who had withdrawn, coming back quickly*]. Monsieur de Guiche. [*To* CYRANO, *pushing him towards the house.*] Go in—perhaps 'twere better
He should not find you here; because it might
Put him upon the scent—
Roxane [*to* CYRANO]. Of my dear secret!
He loves me; he has power; he must not know!
For he might deal my love a cruel stroke.
Cyrano [*going into the house*]. Well, very well!

DE GUICHE *appears*

SCENE II

ROXANE, DE GUICHE; *the* DUENNA *in the Background.*

Roxane [*to* DE GUICHE, *making him a courtesy*]. I'm going out.
De Guiche. I come to take my leave.
Roxane. You go away?
De Guiche. To the war!
Roxane. Ah?
De Guiche. Yes, to-night.
Roxane. Ah!
De Guiche. I am under orders. We besiege
Arras—

Roxane. A siege?
De Guiche. Yes, but my departure
Seems to leave you indifferent.
Roxane. Oh!
De Guiche. As for me,
I'm in despair! When shall we meet again?
You know that I am to command the force?
Roxane [*indifferently*]. Bravo!
De Guiche. The regiment of the Guards—
Roxane [*interested at once*]. The Guards?
De Guiche. In which your cousin serves, that braggart bold;
I shall have my revenge on him down there.
Roxane [*choking with emotion*]. The Guards are going?
De Guiche [*smiling*]. 'Tis my regiment.
Roxane [*falling back on the bench, aside*]. Christian!
De Guiche. What is the matter?
Roxane [*much moved*]. This—departure—
Will break my heart! To care for any one
And know him at the war!
De Guiche [*surprised and charmed*]. For the first time
To speak me kindly, the day I go away!
Roxane [*changing her tone, and fanning herself*]. Then—you would take revenge upon my cousin?
De Guiche. You're on his side?
Roxane. Oh, no! against!
De Guiche. You see him?
Roxane. Seldom.
De Guiche. One meets him everywhere with one
Of the Cadets.
[*Trying to think of the name*]. This Neuvillen—viller—
Roxane. A tall man?
De Guiche. Blond.
Roxane. Flaxen-haired—
De Guiche. Handsome!—
Roxane. Pooh!—
De Guiche. But somewhat stupid.
Roxane. Yes, he seems to be!
[*Changing her tone.*]
But your revenge on Cyrano—Perhaps
'Tis to put him under fire, which he loves?—
That were small comfort. As for me, I know
The way to break his heart!
De Guiche. And how is that?
Roxane. But let the regiment depart, and leave him,
With folded arms, in Paris, through the war,
With his beloved Cadets. That is the way
To rouse a man like him to bitter wrath,
'T will punish him to keep him out of danger.
De Guiche. A woman's wit!—and no one but a woman
Would think of such a trick!
Roxane. He'll eat his heart out;
His friends will gnaw their fists, thus left behind;
And you will be revenged.
De Guiche [*drawing nearer*]. You love me then
A little?
[*She smiles.*] In thus taking up my grudge
I fain would see a proof of love, Roxane!
Roxane. A proof of love it is.
De Guiche [*showing several sealed packets*]. Here are the orders,

Which will be sent this moment to each troop,
Except—
[*Detaches one.*]—this one, for the Cadets.
[*Puts it in his pocket.*] I keep it!
[*Smiling.*]
Ah! Ah! Ah! Cyrano! —his thirst for battle!
You play these tricks on people then?
Roxane. Sometimes.
De Guiche [*very close to her*]. You fill me with delight! Listen: to-night
I should be gone—but—go, when you are moved?
Listen: hard by, in the Rue d'Orléans,
There stands a convent, founded by the head
Of the Capuchins—Father Athanasius.
A layman cannot enter; but the fathers
May stretch a point for me; their sleeves are large,
They'll cover me with ease. These are the monks
Who wait on Richelieu in his own household;
Dreading the uncle, they will fear the nephew.
People will think me gone; I'll come in mask.
Let me wait but one day, capricious love!
Roxane. But if 'tis known, your glory—
De Guiche. Bah!—
Roxane. The siege—
Arras—
De Guiche. So much the worse. Pray let me!
Roxane. No!
De Guiche. Yes!
Roxane [*tenderly*]. I should forbid you!
De Guiche. Ah!
Roxane. Go!
[*Aside.*] Christian stays.
[*Aloud.*]
I would have you a hero—Antony!
De Guiche. Heavenly word! So you admire him?
Roxane. For him my heart has thrilled.
De Guiche. Ah, well, I go!
[*Kisses her hand.*] Are you content?
Roxane. Yes, my friend!
[*He goes out*
The Duenna [*making him a mock courtesy behind his back*]. Yes, my friend!
Roxane [*to the* Duenna]. Let us be silent over what I've done.
Cyrano'ld take it ill to think I'd robbed him
Of going to the war.
[*Calls towards the house.*] Cousin!

Scene III

Roxane, *the* Duenna, Cyrano.

Roxane. We're going
To Clomire's.
[*Points to the door opposite.*]
There'll be speeches by Alcandre
And Lysimon!
The Duenna [*putting her little finger in her ear*]. Yes! But my little finger
Says we shall miss them!
Cyrano [*to* Roxane]. Do not miss these wonders!
They arrive in front of Clomire's door.
The Duenna [*with rapture*]. Oh, see! The knocker's wrapped with linen cloths.

[*To the knocker.*]
So you are muffled, that your iron clang
May not disturb their discourse—wicked child!
Raises it with infinite care and raps softly.
Roxane [*seeing the door open*]. Let us go in!
[*From the threshold, to* CYRANO.] Let Christian wait for me,
If he comes here, as I suppose he will.
Cyrano [*quickly, as she is about to disappear*]. Ah!
[*She turns back.*] On what do you intend to question him,
To-day, after your habit?
Roxane. On—
Cyrano [*quickly*]. On what?
Roxane. But you'll be silent on it!
Cyrano. Like a wall.
Roxane. On nothing!—I shall tell him, "Loose the reins!
Improvise; talk of love. Be glorious!"
Cyrano [*smiling*]. Good!
Roxane. Hush!
Cyrano. Hush!
Roxane. Not a word!
[*Goes in and shuts the door*
Cyrano [*bowing to her, after the door is shut*]. Accept my thanks!
The door opens again and ROXANE *puts out her head.*
Roxane. He would prepare himself—
Cyrano. Oh, no!
Both Together. Hush!—
The door closes.
Cyrano [*calling*]. Christian!

SCENE IV

CYRANO, CHRISTIAN.

Cyrano. I know just what is needed. Give good heed,
This is your chance for glory. Lose no time,
Make no objections. Quickly let us go
To where you lodge. And I will teach you—
Christian. No!
Cyrano. What?
Christian. No, I wait for Roxane here.
Cyrano. What madness
Has seized upon you? Come and quickly learn—
Christian. I tell you no! I'm sick of borrowing
Letters and speeches, playing this timid part.
'Twas good at first! But now I feel she loves me!
Thanks, I am not afraid, I'll speak myself.
Cyrano. Ah!
Christian. And who will say that I shall not know how?
I'm not so stupid after all. You'll see!
Besides, my friend, I've learned a deal from you.
I can speak quite alone! And by the gods,
One thing I can do, take her in my arms!—
[*Seeing* ROXANE *as she comes out of Clomire's house.*]
'Tis she! No, do not leave me, Cyrano!
Cyrano [*bowing to him*]. Speak quite alone, sir.
[*Disappears behind the garden wall*

SCENE V

CHRISTIAN, ROXANE; *the* DUENNA, *for a moment.*

Roxane [*coming out of Clomire's house, with a number of people of whom she takes her leave, courtesies and bows*]. Barthénoïde! Alcandre!

The Duenna [*in distress*]. We missed the discourse on the Tender Passion!

[*Returns to Roxane's house*

Roxane [*still bowing*]. Grémionë! Urimédonte! Adieu!

[*All bow to* ROXANE, *and to each other, separate, and depart by different streets.* ROXANE *sees* CHRISTIAN.]

'T is you!

[*Goes to him.*]

The evening falls. Wait. They are gone.

The air is soft. No one is near. Sit down.

Speak. I am listening.

Christian [*sits by her on the bench. A pause*]. I love you.

Roxane [*closing her eyes*]. Yes, Talk about love.

Christian. I love thee!

Roxane. 'T is the theme, Embroider it.

Christian. I love thee!

Roxane. Yes!

Christian. So much!

Roxane. Of course, and then—

Christian. And then—I'd be so glad If you loved me!—Tell me, Roxane, you do!

Roxane [*with a little grimace*]. You offer gruel when I hoped for sweets! Explain a little how you love!

Christian. But—much!

Roxane. Untwine your feelings from this single string!

Christian. Your neck!—I should so like to kiss it!

Roxane. Christian!

Christian. I love you.

Roxane [*starting to get up*]. Once again!

Christian [*quickly, holding her back*]. I love you not!

Roxane [*sitting down again*]. 'T is fortunate!

Christian. I worship you!

Roxane [*getting up and going away*]. Oh.

Christian. Yes! I grow a fool.

Roxane [*drily*]. And that displeases me, Just as it would if you should ugly grow.

Christian. But—

Roxane. Gather up your scattered eloquence.

Christian. I—

Roxane. I know; you love me. Good-bye.

Christian. Not at once! I'll tell you—

Roxane [*opening the door to go in*]. That you worship me—I know. No! go away!

Christian. But I—

She shuts the door in his face.

Cyrano [*who has come in unperceived a moment before*]. 'T is a success!

SCENE VI

CHRISTIAN, CYRANO; *the* PAGES, *for a moment.*

Christian. Help!

Cyrano. No, Sir!

Christian. I shall die unless at once I win her smiles again—

Cyrano. And how the devil Can I teach you to do it on the spot?

Christian [*seizing his arm*]. Oh! come now, see!

The window of the balcony is lighted up.

Cyrano [*with emotion*]. Her window!

Christian. I shall die!

Cyrano. Lower your voice.

Christian [*in very low voice*]. Shall die—
Cyrano. The night is dark—
Christian. Well?
Cyrano. It may be helped, though you do not deserve it.
Take your position there, unhappy wight!
Before the balcony! I shall stand beneath
And prompt you with your words.
Christian. But—
Cyrano. Hold your tongue.
The Pages [*reappearing in the background, to* CYRANO]. Holloa!
Cyrano. Hush!—
Signals to them to speak low.
First Page [*in a low voice*]. We've just given Montfleury
His serenade—
Cyrano [*aside, quickly*]. Go, put yourselves in ambush.
One at this end the street, the other there,
And if some inconvenient passer comes
Then play a tune.
Second Page. What tune, Gassendi's pupil?
Cyrano. Gay for a woman, mournful for a man.
[*The* PAGES *disappear, one at each end of the street. To* CHRISTIAN.]
Call her!
Christian. Roxane!
Cyrano [*picking up some pebbles and throwing them at the panes*]. Wait till I throw a pebble.
Roxane [*half opening the window*]. Who calls me?
Christian. I.
Roxane. Who?
Christian. Christian.
Roxane [*with disdain*]. Is it you?
Christian. I would speak with you.
Cyrano [*under the balcony*]. Good! Good! Almost whisper.
Roxane. Oh, no! You speak too ill. Begone!
Christian. I beg you!—
Roxane. No, you love me no longer.
Christian [CYRANO *prompting him*]. What a charge!—Ye gods!—to love no more—when—I love most!
Roxane [*stopping, as she was about to close the window*]. That's better!
Christian [*same action*]. Love grows —cradled in my soul—
My troubled soul—the which this cruel babe
Has taken for his cot.
Roxane [*coming out on the balcony*]. That's better now!
But since this love is cruel, you were foolish
That in his cot you did not smother him.
Christian [*same action*]. That did I try—but the attempt was vain;
This new-born babe—is a little—Hercules.
Roxane. That's better
Christian [*same action*]. So that in a trice—he strangled
The serpents—Pride and—Doubt.
Roxane [*leaning on the balcony rail*]. That's very good.
But why with halting accents do you speak?
Your fancy's lame?
Cyrano [*pulling* CHRISTIAN *under the balcony and gliding into his place*]. Hush! This becomes too hard.
Roxane. To-day your words are faltering. Why is this?

Cyrano [*talking in an undertone, like* CHRISTIAN].
Because it now is night; and in the dark
They grope about, striving to find your ear.
Roxane. But mine encounter no such obstacles.
Cyrano. They find their way at once? That is not strange,
Because 't is in my heart that I receive them—
My heart is large—your ear is wondrous small.
Besides, your words descend; their pace is swift,
While mine must climb, Madame, a longer task.
Roxane. But they climb better in these last few moments.
Cyrano. As they have practised, they have learned the way.
Roxane. Truly, 't is from a height I speak to you.
Cyrano. And you would kill me, if you should let fall
From such a height, a hard word on my heart.
Roxane [*with a motion*]. I'm coming down.
Cyrano [*quickly*]. No!
Roxane [*showing him the bench which is under the balcony.*]
Climb upon the bench.
Quickly!
Cyrano [*drawing back with alarm into the darkness.*] No!
Roxane. What?—No?
Cyrano [*his feelings gaining on him more and more.*] For a moment let me
Improve this chance which offers—to be able
To talk in accents soft, but not to see.
Roxane. But not to see?
Cyrano. Yes— 't is a sheer delight;
We guess at one another in the dark,
You see the blackness of a trailing cloak,
I see the whiteness of a summer robe,
And I am but a shadow, you a radiance.
You know not what these moments mean for me!
If ever I was eloquent—
Roxane. You were
Cyrano. Until this hour my words have never come
From my own heart—
Roxane. Why?
Cyrano. Because, until now
I spoke through—
Roxane. What?
Cyrano. —the dizziness where swims
Whome'er you look on— But to-night it seems
That for the first time I shall speak to you.
Roxane. 'T is true that you have quite another voice.
Cyrano [*drawing near, feverishly*]. Yes, quite another, for in the sheltering night
I dare at last to be myself—I dare—
[*Stops, and in bewilderment.*]
What was I saying—I know not—All of this—
Forgive my mounting passion—is so sweet—
And is so new for me.
Roxane. So new?
Cyrano [*distracted and still trying to take back his words*]. So new—
—Why, yes!—to be sincere—without constraint,
The fear of being mocked has wrung my heart.

Roxane. Mocked about what?
Cyrano. Oh—but—about my ardor—
My heart for shame has ever clothed itself
With wit as with a garment. I start forth
To snatch a star from out the sky,—I stop
In fear of ridicule,—and pluck a flower.
Roxane. The flower has charms.
Cyrano. This evening let us scorn it.
Roxane. You never yet have talked to me like this!
Cyrano. Oh! far removed from Cupid's enginery
'T is pleasant to escape to greener things.
Instead of drinking from a golden thimble
Insipid syrups, slowly, drop by drop,
Shall we not let the soul allay its thirst
By drinking freely from the river's flood?
Roxane. But your wit?
Cyrano. I used to make you stay.
But now to speak with a court poet's phrases
Would be to affront this night, these odors sweet,
This magic hour, and even Nature's self.
Let Heaven, with one glance of her gleaming stars,
Take away all our wonted artifice;
I fear, lest in our subtle alchemy
The heart's true feeling may go up in smoke,
The soul may spend itself in empty play,
And e'en refinement be refined to naught.
Roxane. But your wit?
Cyrano. I hate, when it plays with love.
For when one truly loves, it is a crime
Too long to thrust and parry. The moment comes—
And those to whom it never comes I pity—
When in our hearts we feel a noble passion
Saddened by every clever phrase we turn.
Roxane. If to us two this moment now has come,
What words will you speak to me?
Cyrano. Every word
That rises to my lips. I'll cast them all
Before you in a heap, with no arrangement—
I love you—I am smothered—I am mad—
I love you—I am faint—it is too much;
Your name hangs in my heart like a bell's tongue,
And evermore, Roxane, with love I tremble,
And the bell swings, and then your name rings out.
And everything you do lives in my heart;
Last year there was one day I well remember,
The tenth of May, one morn you dressed your hair
So that its radiance burnt into my soul;
And just as he, who at the sun too long
Has gazed, sees circles red where'er he looks;

So when I left the flames in which I swam
My eyes saw blots of gold on everything.
Roxane. Yes, this indeed is love—
Cyrano. Truly, this passion
Jealous and terrible, which sweeps me on,
Is love indeed, with all its mournful madness!
Is love indeed, and yet it is not selfish!
Ah, for your joy I'd gladly give my own,
Even if you should never know; if I
Might sometimes from afar hear the soft laugh
Of happiness born from my sacrifice,—
Your very look rouses new worth in me,
Do you begin to understand it now?
And feel my soul climb slowly through the dark?
Ah! but this night is all too fair, too sweet!
I say all this to you; and you, you listen;
It is too much. E'en in my maddest hopes
I never hoped so much. There's nothing left,
Except for me to die at once. She trembles,
There through the branches dark, and for my words,
For you are trembling, a leaf among the leaves,
For thou art trembling, and I plainly felt
Whether thou wouldst or no, the trembling dear
Of thy sweet hand descend the jasmine branch.
Madly kisses the end of a hanging branch.
Roxane. I tremble, I weep, I love thee, I am thine—
Aye, drunk with love!
Cyrano. Then let death come at once.
Since it is I who mixed the cup for thee!
I ask but one thing more—
Christian [*under the balcony*]. A kiss!
Roxane [*drawing back*]. What?
Cyrano. Oh!
Roxane. You're asking?
Cyrano. Yes—I—
[*To* CHRISTIAN, *aside.*] You go far too fast!
Christian. Since she is moved, I must improve my chance!
Cyrano [*to* ROXANE]. Yes, I—I asked, 't is true, but, gracious heavens!
I understand, I was too bold by far.
Roxane [*somewhat disappointed*]. You insist no more than that?
Cyrano. Yes, I insist—
Without insisting. Yes! Your modesty
Is saddened—Well, this kiss—grant me it not.
Christian [*to* CYRANO, *pulling his cloak*]. Why?
Cyrano. Hush, Christian.
Roxane [*leaning over*]. What do you say so low?
Cyrano. I scold myself for having gone too far,
And to myself I said, "Hush, Christian."
[*The lutes begin to play.*] Wait!
Some one is coming.
[ROXANE *closes the window.* CYRANO *listens to the lutes, one of which plays a lively air, the other a mournful one.*]
Sad? Gay? What's their plan?

Is it a man, or woman?—'t is a monk!

A CAPUCHIN *enters, going from house to house, lantern in hand, looking at the doors.*

SCENE VII

CYRANO, CHRISTIAN, *a* CAPUCHIN.

Cyrano [*to the* CAPUCHIN]. Who's this new follower of Diogenes?

The Capuchin. I'm looking for the house—

Christian. He's in our way!

The Capuchin. Of Madame Madeleine Robin.

Christian. What's he after?

Cyrano [*showing him a street leading away*]. This way, keep to the right,—still to the right.

The Capuchin. Thank you! I'll say for you a *pater noster.*

[*Goes out*

Cyrano. Good luck. My prayers accompany your cowl!

Comes back to CHRISTIAN.

SCENE VIII

CYRANO, CHRISTIAN.

Christian. Get me this kiss!—

Cyrano. No!

Christian. Soon or late—

Cyrano. 'T is true!

'T will come; this moment of supreme delight
When your two mouths together shall be drawn
Because of her red lips, and your moustache.
[*To himself.*]
I'd rather that it were because—

Noise of shutters reopening. CHRISTIAN *hides under the balcony.*

SCENE IX

CYRANO, CHRISTIAN, ROXANE.

Roxane [*coming forward on the balcony*]. 'T is you?
We were speaking of—of—of a—

Cyrano. Of a kiss.

The word is sweet, I see not why your lips
So fear to speak it; if it burns them now
What will it be itself? Be not afraid.
Make not a terror of it. Did you not,
Just now, unknowingly, without alarm,
Leave off your mockery, and softly pass
From sigh to sigh, and from a sigh to tears?
Pass on yet further by the easy path—
'Twixt tears and kiss there's but a moment's tremble.

Roxane. Be still!

Cyrano. A kiss, when all is said, what is it?
An oath sworn nearer by; a promise made
With greater certainty; a vow which seeks
To make itself more binding; a rosy dot
Placed on the "i" in loving; 't is a secret
Told to the mouth instead of to the ear;
A moment of the infinite, which makes
A sound like to the humming of bees' wings;
A greeting like the sweet breath of a flower;
A way to feel the heart beat for a space,

And taste the soul a moment on the lips.

Roxane. Be still!

Cyrano. A kiss, Madame, it is so noble
That e'en the Queen of France, the Queen herself,
Let her most happy courtier take one!

Roxane. Well!

Cyrano [*growing more impassioned*]. Like Buckingham, I've suffered silent pangs;
Like him, a Queen I worship—you, my Queen.
Like him, I'm sad and faithful.

Roxane. And like him
You're fair.

Cyrano [*aside, sobered*]. True, I am fair, I quite forgot.

Roxane. Well, climb and pluck this flower without a peer!

Cyrano [*pushing* CHRISTIAN *toward the balcony*]. Climb!

Roxane. This heart beat.

Cyrano. Climb!

Roxane. This humming of bees' wings.

Cyrano. Climb!

Christian [*hesitating*]. But now it seems perhaps I'd better not!

Roxane. This moment of the infinite.

Cyrano [*pushing him*]. Climb, fool!

CHRISTIAN *plunges forward, and by means of the bench, the branches, and the pillars reaches the balustrade, which he vaults.*

Christian. Ah! Roxane!

Embraces her and bends over her lips.

Cyrano. Ah! My heart, what torture strange!
Kiss, feast of love where I am Lazarus,
There reach me in the dark some crumbs from thee;
But still I feel my heart has something gained
Since on these lips where Roxane now is caught
It is the words I spoke just now she kisses.

[*The lutes are heard.*]

Now sad, now gay, the Capuchin!

[*Pretends to run as if he were arriving from a distance, and calls in a loud voice.*] Holloa!

Roxane. What is it?

Cyrano. It is I, I was just passing—
Christian's still there?

Christian [*greatly astonished*]. What, Cyrano?

Roxane. Good evening, Cousin!

Cyrano. Good evening, cousin!

Roxane. I'm coming down.

Disappears in the house. The CAPUCHIN *re-enters in the background.*

Christian [*seeing him*]. Again!

SCENE X

CYRANO, CHRISTIAN, ROXANE, *the* CAPUCHIN, RAGUENEAU.

The Capuchin. 'T is here—I'm sure—Madeleine Robin!

Cyrano. You said Ro-*lin.*

The Capuchin. No, *Bin:* B, i, n, *bin!*

Roxane [*appearing on the threshold of the house followed by* RAGUENEAU *carrying a lantern, and by* CHRISTIAN]. What is it?

The Capuchin. A letter.

Christian. What?

The Capuchin [*to* ROXANE]. Oh! It must be

About some holy matter. It was a lord,
A worthy lord who—
Roxane. 'T is De Guiche!
Christian. He dares?—
Roxane. Oh, but he will not trouble me forever.
[*Unsealing the letter.*]
I love you, and if—
[*She reads by the light of Ragueneau's lantern, aside in a low voice.*]
"Mademoiselle—
[*Aside, and apart from the others.*]
The drums
Beat loud, my soldiers buckle on their tunics;
They go, 't is thought that I am gone; I stay,
I disobey you. I am in this convent.
I am coming and I warn you of it first,
By a monk who is as simple as a lamb,
And who knows naught of this. Your lips have smiled
Just now too kindly on me; I have wished
To see them once again. Bid all begone,
And graciously receive a man too bold,
And yet already pardoned, may I hope?
Who signs himself your very humble—"
[*To the* CAPUCHIN.] Father,
Here's what this letter tells me, listen to it:
[*All draw near, she reads aloud.*]
"Mademoiselle,
We must submit ourselves
To the Cardinal's will, hard though it be for you;
And that is why I've chosen a Capuchin,
Very discreet, intelligent, and holy,
To send this letter unto your fair hands.
We wish that he should give you, at your dwelling,
At once, the Church's blessing—
[*Turns the page.*] —on your marriage.
Christian must secretly become your husband.
I send him. You dislike him. Be resigned.
Bethink yourself that heaven will bless your zeal,
And be assured again, Mademoiselle,
Of his respect who is, and ever will be,
Your very humble, very—*et cætera.*"
The Capuchin. The worthy lord! I had no fear; I said so.
It could be only on some holy errand.
Roxane [*aside to* CHRISTIAN]. Do I read letters well?
Christian. Hum!
Roxane [*aloud, in despair*]. Ah! 'T is frightful.
The Capuchin [*turning the light of his lantern on* CYRANO]. Is it you?
Christian. It is I!
The Capuchin [*turning the light towards him and apparently seized with doubts, when he sees his good looks*]. But why—
Roxane [*quickly*]. *Post scriptum.*
"Give for the convent six score gold pistoles."
The Capuchin. A worthy, worthy lord!
[*To* ROXANE.] Resign yourself.
Roxane [*like a martyr*]. I am resigned.
[*While* RAGUENEAU *opens the doors to the* CAPUCHIN, *whom* CHRISTIAN *invites to enter, she says aside to* CYRANO.] You make De Guiche wait here.
He's coming—let him not come in before—
Cyrano. I understand.

[*To the* CAPUCHIN.] To bless them takes how long?

The Capuchin. A quarter of an hour.

Cyrano [*pushing them all towards the house*]. Go, I stay.

Roxane [*to* CHRISTIAN]. Come.

[*They go in*

Cyrano. How to make De Guiche lose fifteen minutes?

[*Rushes to the bench and climbs up the wall towards the balcony.*]

There! Let us climb—my plan is made—

[*The lutes begin to play a doleful bar.*]

Holloa!

It is a man!

[*The tremolo becomes mournful.*]

Ho! ho. This time it is one!

[*He is on the balcony, pulls his hat over his eyes, takes off his sword, then leans forward and looks out.*

No, it is not too high.

[*He vaults the balustrade, and drawing towards him the long branch of one of the trees which border the wall of the garden, he grasps it with both hands, ready to let himself fall.*]

This atmosphere I am about to trouble.

SCENE XI

CYRANO, DE GUICHE.

De Guiche [*entering, masked, feeling his way in the night*]. What is this cursèd Capuchin about?

Cyrano. The deuce, my voice?—If he should recognize it?

[*Letting go with one hand, he pretends to turn an invisible key.*]

Cric, crac!

[*Solemnly.*] Speak like a Gascon, Cyrano.

De Guiche [*looking at the house*]. 'T is there! I cannot see. This mask annoys me.

[*Starts to go in.* CYRANO *leaps from the balcony, holding on to the branch, which bends, and lands him between* DE GUICHE *and the door; he pretends to fall heavily, as if from a great distance, and flattens out on the ground, where he remains motionless, as if stunned.* DE GUICHE *jumps backward.*]

Hah! What!

[*When he lifts his eyes, the branch has swung back; he sees only the sky; he does not understand.*]

Whence falls this man here?

Cyrano [*sitting up, and speaking with a Gascon accent*]. From the moon.

De Guiche. From the—?

Cyrano [*in a dreamy voice*]. What time is it?

De Guiche. He's lost his mind.

Cyrano. What country? What o'clock? What day? What season?

De Guiche. But—

Cyrano. I am dazed.

De Guiche. Monsieur—

Cyrano. For like a bomb I've fallen from the moon!

De Guiche [*impatient*]. Yes, but Monsieur!—

Cyrano [*getting up, with a terrible voice*]. Thence have I fallen!

De Guiche [*drawing back*]. Yes, yes, thence you fell!

—Perhaps he is a madman.

Cyrano [*advancing towards him*]. And my fall,—

It is no metaphor!

De Guiche. But—

Cyrano. A century since.

Or else a moment—in my fall I lost

All track of time,—I was in that yellow ball!

De Guiche [*shrugging his shoulders*]. Yes, let me pass.

Cyrano [*standing in his way*]. Where am I? Tell me frankly,

Keep nothing hid! In what place, in what spot,

Monsieur, have I just fallen like a meteor?

De Guiche. The Devil!

Cyrano. As I fell I could not choose

My landing-place—I know not where I fell!—

And is it to a moon or to a world,

Whither my weight has just now drawn me down?

De Guiche. But, sir, I tell you—

Cyrano [*with a cry of terror which makes* De Guiche *draw back*]. Ha! Ye gods! Meseems

That in this country folk have faces black!

De Guiche [*raising his hand to his face*]. What?

Cyrano [*with a distinct show of fear*]. Am I in Algiers? Are you a native?

De Guiche [*who has felt his mask*]. This mask—

Cyrano [*pretending to be somewhat reassured*]. I'm then in Genoa or Venice?

De Guiche [*trying to pass*]. A lady waits me—

Cyrano [*wholly reassured*]. Then I am in Paris!

De Guiche [*smiling in spite of himself*]. He's an amusing fellow.

Cyrano. Ah! You laugh?

De Guiche. I laugh, but wish to pass.

Cyrano [*beaming*]. Indeed, 'tis Paris!

[*Entirely at his ease, smiling, brushing himself, and bowing.*]

I came—excuse me—by the latest whirlwind.

The ether clings to me. I've travelled far!

My eyes are filled with star-dust. On my spurs

I still have shreds torn from a planet's hide!

[*Picking something from his sleeve.*]

See, on my doublet, there's a comet's hair!

Puffs as if to blow it away.

De Guiche [*beside himself*]. Monsieur!—

Cyrano [*just as he starts to pass, holds out his leg as if to show him something, and stops him*]. And in my leg I bring a tooth

From the Great Bear,—and as I passed the Trident

Trying to dodge one of its three sharp prongs,

I fell, and landed seated on the Scales,

Whose needle at this moment marks my weight.

[*Quickly preventing* De Guiche *from passing, and taking him by the button of his doublet.*]

If you should press my nose between your fingers,

It would spurt milk!—

De Guiche. What? Milk?

Cyrano. From the Milky Way!

De Guiche. Oh, by the lords of Hell!—

Cyrano. 'T is Heaven that sends me!

[*Folding his arms.*] Now, would you think, I saw it as I fell,—

That Sirius, at night, puts on a cap?

[*Confidentially.*] The other Bear is still too small to bite.

[*Smiling.*] And as I crossed the Lyre,
I broke a string.
[*Proudly.*] But I shall write a book
about it all,
And the golden stars, that in my
scorchèd cloak
I brought away at my own risk and
peril,
Will serve as asterisks when it is
printed.
De Guiche. Finally, I insist—
Cyrano. I catch your meaning!
De Guiche. Monsieur!
Cyrano. You wish to hear from my
own mouth
Of what the moon is made, and if folk
dwell
Within the roundness of this strange
alembic?
De Guiche. No! No! I wish—
Cyrano. To know how I ascended?
'T was by a means that I devised
myself.
De Guiche [*discouraged*]. He's mad!
Cyrano [*scornfully*]. I did not use
the stupid eagle
Of Regiomontanus, nor the pigeon
Archytas used—
De Guiche. Mad!—but a learnèd
madman!
Cyrano. I followed naught that
had been done before.
[De Guiche *has succeeded in passing,
and is striding towards Roxane's
door.* Cyrano *follows him, ready
to lay hold of him.*]
Six ways did I devise to violate
The virgin Azure!
De Guiche [*turning*]. Six?
Cyrano [*volubly*]. I deck my body,
Naked as on the day that I was
born,
With crystal phials filled up to the
brim
With tears dropped from the morning
sky, and then
Expose me to the full blaze of the sun,
Which draws me up the while it drinks
the dew.
De Guiche [*surprised and taking a
step towards* Cyrano]. Yes, that
makes one.
Cyrano [*drawing back to get him on
the other side*]. And this too I
could do:
Produce a whirlwind, and so take my
flight,—
By rarefying air in a cedar chest
With burning mirrors in an icosahe-
dron.
De Guiche [*taking another step*].
Two!
Cyrano [*still drawing back*]. Or, hav-
ing skill of hand as well as brain,
On a grasshopper made with springs
of steel,
Dart, with successive blasts of powder
fired,
Through the blue pastures where the
stars are grazing.
De Guiche [*following him without
suspecting it, and counting on his
fingers*].
Three!
Cyrano. And since all smoke must
surely rise aloft,
Blow in a globe enough to bear me up.
De Guiche [*same action, more and
more amazed*]. Four!
Cyrano. Since Diana, when her
bow is smallest,
Loves, oh, ye oxen, to suck out your
marrow!—
To anoint myself withal!
De Guiche [*in stupefaction*]. Five!
Cyrano [*who, while talking to him
has led him to the other side of the
street, near a bench*]. Finally,

Placing myself upon a plate of iron,
I take a magnet, and throw it in the air!
'T is a good way—the iron rushes on
Fast as the magnet flies, and follows after.
Again I throw the magnet—there you are!
In this way I ascend without a limit.

De Guiche. Six! These be six good ways. What system, sir,
Of the six did you choose?

Cyrano. I chose a seventh.

De Guiche. Really, what is it?

Cyrano. You could never guess!

De Guiche. This rascal's growing interesting now.

Cyrano [*making the noise of the waves, with great, mysterious gestures*]. Hooüh! Hooüh!

De Guiche. Well?

Cyrano. You guess?

De Guiche. No.

Cyrano. The tide!
At the hour when the moon doth draw the wave
I lay upon the sand,—after a bath,—
And the head led the way, my friend, because
The hair keeps so much water in its locks.
I rose in air, up, straight up, like an angel,
I ascended gently, softly, with no effort,
When suddenly I felt a shock,—then—

De Guiche [*carried away by curiosity, sitting down on the bench*]. Then?

Cyrano. Then—[*resuming his natural voice*],
The quarter hour has passed. I let you go.
The marriage is made.

De Guiche [*getting up with a bound*]. What! Come! Am I then drunk?
This voice?
[*The door of the house opens, and lackeys appear, carrying lighted candelabra. Light.* CYRANO *takes off his hat with its lowered brim.*]
This nose! Cyrano?

Cyrano [*bowing*]. Cyrano.
This very moment they've exchanged the rings.

De Guiche. Who are they?
[*He turns—Tableau. Behind the lackeys,* ROXANE *and* CHRISTIAN *hold hands. The* CAPUCHIN *follows them, smiling.* RAGUENEAU *also holds a torch. The* DUENNA *closes the line, in great confusion, dressed in a wrapper.*] Heavens!

SCENE XII

The same, ROXANE, CHRISTIAN, *the* CAPUCHIN, RAGUENEAU, LACKEYS, *the* DUENNA.

De Guiche [*to* ROXANE]. You!
[*Recognizing* CHRISTIAN *with stupefaction*]. He?
[*Bowing to* ROXANE *with admiration*]. A clever stroke!
[*To* CYRANO]. My compliments, inventor of machines!
Your story would have made a saint stop short
At heaven's gate. Remember the details,
For it might well be turned into a book.

Cyrano [*bowing*]. Sir, that's advice that I engage to follow.

The Capuchin [*showing the lovers to* DE GUICHE, *and wagging his great white beard with satisfaction*]. A handsome pair, my son, joined there by you!

De Guiche [*giving him a frigid glance*]. Yes.

[*To* ROXANE]. Be kind enough, Madame, to bid your husband
Farewell.

Roxane. Why so?

De Guiche [*to* CHRISTIAN]. The troops are on the march.
Go join your regiment!

Roxane. To go to war?

De Guiche. Of course.

Roxane. But the Cadets, sir, do not go.

De Guiche. They'll go.

[*Drawing out the paper he had in his pocket*]. Here is the order.

[*To* CHRISTIAN]. Take it, Baron!

Roxane [*throwing herself into Christian's arms*]. Christian!

De Guiche [*sneeringly, to* CYRANO]. The wedding night is still far off!

Cyrano [*aside*]. To think that he believes that greatly pains me!

Christian [*to* ROXANE]. Your lips again!

Cyrano. Come, come, that is enough!

Christian [*continuing to embrace* ROXANE]. 'T is hard to leave her. You know not—

Cyrano [*trying to draw him away*]. Yes, I know.

Drums beating a march are heard in the distance.

De Guiche [*who has retired to the background.*] The regiment is off!

Roxane [*to* CYRANO, *holding back* CHRISTIAN *whom* CYRANO *still tries to draw away*]. I trust him to you!
O promise me that naught shall put his life
In danger.

Cyrano. I shall try—but cannot promise.

Roxane [*same action*]. And promise that he shall be very careful!

Cyrano. Yes, I shall try, but—

Roxane. In this fearful siege,
That he shall ne'er be cold.

Cyrano. I'll do my best
But—

Roxane [*same action*]. That he shall be faithful—

Cyrano. Yes, of course,
But—

Roxane [*same action*]. That he shall write often!

Cyrano [*stopping himself*]. Ah! I promise!

CURTAIN.

FOURTH ACT

THE GASCON CADETS

The station occupied by CARBON DE CASTEL-JALOUX'S *company at the siege of Arras. In the background, a rampart crossing the entire stage. Beyond is seen a plain stretching away to the horizon; the country is covered with earthworks. The walls of Arras, and its roofs, silhouetted against the sky, in the far distance. Tents; arms scattered about, drums, etc. Day is about to dawn. The east is yellow. Sentinels stationed at intervals. Camp-fires. The Gascon Cadets are asleep, wrapped in their cloaks.* CARBON DE CASTEL-JALOUX *and* LE BRET *are on watch. They are pale and very thin.* CHRISTIAN *is asleep among the rest, wrapped in his cape, in the foreground, his face lit by the firelight. Silence.*

Scene I

Christian, Carbon de Castel-Jaloux, Le Bret, *the* Cadets; *afterwards* Cyrano.

Le Bret. 'T is frightful!
Carbon. Frightful!
Le Bret. Lord!
Carbon [*making a sign to him to speak lower*]. Swear in a whisper.
You'll waken them. [*To the* Cadets.] Hush! Sleep. [*To* Le Bret.] He who sleeps, dines!
Le Bret. When one is sleepless, 't is lean fare enough.
What famine!
Scattering shots heard in the distance.
Carbon. Curses on these wretched shots!
They will awake my lads. [*To the* Cadets, *who raise their heads.*] Sleep on!
They settle down again. More shots, nearer.
A Cadet [*moving*]. The deuce!
Again?
Carbon. 'T is nothing. Cyrano returns.
The heads which had been lifted fall again.
A Sentinel [*without*]. Halt! Who goes there?
Cyrano's Voice. I! Bergerac!
The Sentinel on the Rampart. The devil!
Who's there?
Cyrano [*appearing on top of the rampart*]. Bergerac, fool!
Le Bret. Ah, thank the Lord!
Cyrano [*making a sign to him to awake no one*]. Hush!
Le Bret. Wounded?
Cyrano. You know well they have a habit
Of missing me each morning.
Le Bret. 'T is too much
To risk your life to carry every day
A letter—
Cyrano [*stopping before* Christian]. But I gave my word he'd write.
[*Looks at him.*] He sleeps. He has grown pale. If the poor child
Knew how he dies of hunger—but always fair!
Le Bret. Go straight to sleep.
Cyrano. Now do not scold, Le Bret—
Know this: that where I pass the Spanish lines
I've chosen a spot where they are always drunk.
Le Bret. Some day you should bring back some food for us.
Cyrano. I must go light to pass; and yet I know
There'll be some news to-night. If I mistake not,
The French will either eat or die.
Le Bret. Tell on!
Cyrano. No. I am not quite certain—you will see—
Carbon. To die of hunger while one lays a siege
Is sorry warfare.
Le Bret. Ah! this siege of Arras
Is a strange tangle, full of many knots:
We besiege Arras;—caught in our own trap,
The Cardinal-Prince of Spain besieges us.
Cyrano. Some one should come to besiege him in turn.
Le Bret. It is no laughing matter.
Cyrano. Oh!
Le Bret. To think

That every day you risk a life like yours
To carry—[*Seeing him turn towards a tent.*] Whither now?
Cyrano. To write another!
[*Lifts the tent-flap and disappears*

Scene II

The Same; without Cyrano.

Day has just dawned. Rosy light. The town of Arras lies golden on the horizon. A cannon-shot is heard, followed immediately by a ruffle of drums, very distant, to the left. Other drums are heard near by. The drum-beats answer each other, and coming together almost burst upon the scene; then withdraw towards the right, going through the camp. Noises of awakening. Distant voices of officers.

Carbon [*with a sigh*]. The reveille—alas! [*The* Cadets *move in their cloaks and stretch themselves.*] Nourishing sleep!
You cease; and what will be their cry I know
Only too well!
A Cadet [*sitting up*]. I'm hungry!
Another. I am dying!
All. Oh!
Carbon. Get up!
Third Cadet. Not a movement!
Fourth Cadet. Not a step!
The First [*looking at himself in a piece of his cuirass*]. My tongue is yellow; this weather is unwholesome!
Another. My badge of barony for a bit of cheese!
Another. If no one will provide for my poor stomach
Something on which the chyle may do its work,
Achilles-like, I'll sulk within my tent.
Another. Bread!
Carbon [*going into the tent into which* Cyrano *had entered: in a low voice*]. Cyrano!
Others. We're dying!
Carbon [*still in a low voice, at the door of the tent*]. To our aid!
You who can always answer them so gaily,
Come, cheer them up!
Second Cadet [*rushing at the first, who is chewing something.*] What are you nibbling on?
The First. On cannon-wadding, fried with axle-grease,
Cooked in a helmet. There is not much game
Here around Arras.
Another [*entering*]. I'm just from the hunt.
Another [*same action*]. And in the river Scarpe I have been fishing.
All [*standing and rushing upon the last comers*].
What have you got—a pheasant, or a carp?
Come, show them quickly!
The Fisherman. A gudgeon.
The Hunter. And a sparrow.
All [*exasperated*]. Enough! Let's mutiny.
Carbon. Help, Cyrano!
It is now broad day.

Scene III

The Same; Cyrano.

Cyrano [*coming out of his tent, placid, a pen over his ear, a book in his hand*]. Well?
[*Silence. To the first* Cadet.]
Why are you walking with this lagging step?

The Cadet. I've something in my heels which troubles me.
Cyrano. And what is that?
The Cadet. My stomach.
Cyrano. So have I.
The Cadet. Does it not trouble you?
Cyrano. It makes me tall.
Second Cadet. I have long teeth.
Cyrano. You'll get the bigger bite.
A Third. My stomach's hollow.
Cyrano. We'll use it for a drum.
Another. And as for me, I've buzzings in my ears.
Cyrano. No, no! A famished stomach, not your ears!
Another. Oh, to eat something—dressed with oil!
Cyrano [*taking off the Cadet's helmet and putting it in his hand*]. Your sallet!
Another. Is there naught to devour?
Cyrano [*tossing him the book he holds in his hand*]. Try my Homer!
Another. The Minister at home has four good meals.
Cyrano. Should he send you a partridge?
The Same. Well, why not?
And wine.
Cyrano. Some Burgundy, Richelieu, if you please!
The Same. By some good Capuchin.
Cyrano. His highness gray?
Another. I'm hungry as a bear.
Cyrano. Eat your own fat then!
First Cadet [*shrugging his shoulders*].
That is your way—to jest, to score your point.
Cyrano. Ah, yes, the jest, the point!—and well I hope
That I may die some night, 'neath rosy skies,
For a good cause, and making a good jest.
Oh, to fall by the only noble weapon,
Struck by a foeman worthy of one's self,—
Fall on the field of glory, not the sick-bed,
With point in heart, as well as on one's lips!
Cry of All. I'm hungry!
Cyrano [*crossing his arms*]. Shame! You think of naught but food.
Come, Bertrandou, the fifer, once a shepherd.
Take from its leathern case one of your fifes.
Blow! and play for this pack of lazy gluttons
The old airs of our home, that hold us fast,—
In which each note is like a little sister;
In which are caught the tones of voices dear—
Airs sweet and slow, like to the curling smoke
That rises from the village of our birth,—
These melodies which speak our native tongue.
[*The old man sits down and prepares his fife.*]
And let the warlike fife, that grieves to-day,
Bethink itself a moment—while your fingers
Dance up and down its length like darting birds—
That ere 'twas wrought of ebony, 'twas a reed;
And let it marvel at its song, and find
Sweet memories of its peaceful, rustic youth.
[*The old man begins to play airs of the South of France.*]

List, Gascons,—'neath his fingers 'tis no longer
The camp's shrill fife, it is the forest's flute;
And from his lips no battle-blast is blown,
'T is the slow whistle of our humble goatherds.
List, Gascons,—'tis the vale, the plain, the forest;
The sunbrowned herdsman with his bonnet red;
The Dordogne, with its evenings green and sweet.
List, Gascons,—'tis the whole of Gascony!

All heads are bowed; all eyes are dreamy. Tears are furtively wiped away on the backs of sleeves and corners of cloaks.

Carbon [*to* CYRANO, *aside*]. But you have made them weep.

Cyrano. Only homesickness.

A nobler ill than hunger: mind, not body.
'T is well their pains should strike another organ,
And that it is their hearts which now are wrung.

Carbon. But when you touch their hearts you weaken them.

Cyrano [*signalling to the drummer to approach*]. Withhold your blame.
The courage in their blood
Awakens quickly. 'T is enough—

Makes a gesture. The drum is sounded.

All [*rising and rushing to arms*]. What! What!

Cyrano [*smiling*]. One ruffle of the drum's enough, you see.

Farewell regrets, dreams, love, and province old!
The drum soon drives away what the fife brought!

A Cadet [*looking into the distance*]. Ah! There's Monsieur de Guiche.

All the Cadets [*murmuring*]. Hoo!

Cyrano [*smiling*]. Flattering sound!

A Cadet. He wearies us!

Another. With his great ruff of lace
Over his armor—he comes to show it off.

Another. It is like wearing cambric over steel.

The First. It's good—if you have boils upon your neck.

The Second. A courtier still.

Another. The nephew of his uncle.

Carbon. Yet he's a Gascon.

The First. Trust him not. He's false.
Because the Gascons—really—should be mad.
A Gascon with his wits is dangerous.

Le Bret. He's pale.

Another. He's hungry, like the rest of us.
But since his armor's gay with silver-gilt
His belly-pangs but sparkle in the sun.

Cyrano [*quickly*]. Let us no longer seem to be in pain.
Your cards, your pipes, your dice!—

[*All quickly begin their games,—on the drums, on the benches, and on their cloaks spread on the ground; and they light long pipes of tobacco.*]

I read Descartes.

Walks up and down, and reads a little book which he has taken out of his pocket. Tableau—DE GUICHE *enters; everyone seems absorbed and contented. He is very pale. He goes toward* CARBON.

Scene IV

The Same; De Guiche.

De Guiche [*to* Carbon]. Good day!
[*They both look at each other.*]
[*Aside, with satisfaction.*] He's turning green.

Carbon [*same tone*]. He's naught but eyes.

De Guiche [*looking at the* Cadets]. Are these the malcontents?—Yes, gentlemen,
I hear I am lampooned on every side:
And that, among your aristocracy
Bred on a mountain-side, in Périgord
Or Béarn, you cannot find hard words enough
For your commander,—calling me a trickster,
A shallow courtier; that it troubles you
To see a point-lace collar on my cuirass;
And that you never cease to take it ill
That every Gascon need not be a beggar.
[*Silence. They play; they smoke.*]
Shall I then have you punished by your Captain?
No!

Carbon. I am free and give no punishments.

De Guiche. Ah!

Carbon. I've paid my company. It is my own:
And as a soldier only I obey.

De Guiche. Indeed! That is enough.
[*Addressing the* Cadets.] I can despise
Your mockery. You know how I stand fire.
Yesterday, at Bapaume, you saw full well
How furiously I put to flight the Count
Of Bucquoi. Like an avalanche I hurled
My men on his: thrice and again I charged.

Cyrano [*without lifting his face from his book.*] And your white scarf?

De Guiche [*surprised and satisfied*]. You know that detail too?
It came about, that as I wheeled my horse,
Rallying my soldiers for the final charge,
A pack of fugitives dragged me along
Close to the enemy's ranks. I was in danger
Of being taken prisoner and shot;
When I had wit enough to drop to earth
The scarf that showed my military rank,
And so was able to escape the Spaniards
Without their recognition,—then return,
Leading my rallied force, and win the fight!
—What say you of this feat?

The Cadets *appear not to listen; but their cards and dice-boxes remain in the air, the smoke of their pipes in their cheeks. A pause.*

Cyrano. That Henry Fourth
Would never have agreed, 'gainst any odds,
To take one feather from his snow-white crest.

Silent joy. The cards fall, the dice drop, the smoke escapes.

De Guiche. But still the ruse succeeded!

Same wait; while games and smoke are suspended.

Cyrano. Like enough.

But it is not an honor lightly yielded,—
To be a target.
[*Cards fall, dice drop, smoke rises, with growing satisfaction.*] Now, had I been there
When the abandoned scarf fell to the ground—
Our kinds of courage differ, sir, in this—
I should have picked it up and put it on.

De Guiche. Yes, Gascon boasting still!

Cyrano. You call it boasting?
Lend it to me,—and on this very night
I'll lead the assault, with the scarf draped about me.

De Guiche. Another Gascon offer! You know well
The scarf was lost within the foemen's lines,
By the River Scarpe, where, swept by leaden hail,
No one can go to seek it.

Cyrano [*taking the white scarf from his pocket, and handing it to him*]. Here it is!

Silence. The CADETS *smother their laughter under their cards and dice-boxes.* DE GUICHE *turns and looks at them; they immediately become serious again, and begin their games. One of them whistles the mountain melody played by the fife.*

De Guiche [*taking the scarf*]. Thanks. With this piece of white I shall be able
To give a signal—I was loath to give.
Goes to the rampart, climbs it, and waves the scarf several times in the air.

All. What?

The Sentinel [*on top of the rampart*]. See the man down there, who's running hither!

De Guiche [*coming down again*]. He's a pretended spy. He renders us
Great service; for the tidings that he takes
To the enemy are those I give myself;
And so I have a chance to shape their plans.

Cyrano. A scurvy trick!

De Guiche [*carelessly tying on his scarf*]. It works! As we were saying—
Ah, I was about to tell some news. To-night,
Making one effort more to get us food,
The Marshal goes to Dourlens, without drums.
The King's provision-trains are there. He'll join them
By going through the fields; but to get back
With ease, he's taken with him such a force
The foe will have a fair field for attack,
With half the army absent from the camp.

Carbon. Yes, if the Spaniards knew, it would go hard;
But do they know this sally?

De Guiche. Yes, they know.
They will attack us.

Carbon. Ah!

De Guiche. My false spy came
To warn me of their near assault. He said:
"I can decide for them the very spot.—
At what point do you wish the battle fought?

I'll tell them that it is the least defended,—
And there they'll try their hand."
I answered him:
"'T is well. Go from the camp. Watch the whole line;—
'T will be the spot where I shall give the signal."

Carbon [*to the* CADETS]. Make ready, gentlemen.

All rise. Noise of swords, and buckling of belts.

De Guiche. 'T is in an hour.

First Cadet. Ah!

All sit down again, and take up the interrupted game.

De Guiche. You must gain time. The Marshal will return.

Carbon. And to gain time?

De Guiche. You will have the great kindness
To give your lives!

Cyrano. Ah,—is this vengeance, then?

De Guiche. I shall make no pretense that, had I loved you,
I should have chosen you for this defense.
But since none vie with you in reckless daring,
I serve my King and satisfy my grudge.

Cyrano. Permit me, sir, to express my gratitude.

De Guiche. I know you like to fight —one to a hundred!
You'll not complain that you lack such a task.

Goes aside with CARBON.

Cyrano [*to the* CADETS]. 'T is well! We shall add to the Gascon blazon,
Which bears six chevrons, sirs—azure and or,
One chevron more of gules—which still was lacking.

DE GUICHE *talks aside with* CARBON DE CASTEL-JALOUX, *in the background. Orders are given. The defense is made ready.* CYRANO *goes to* CHRISTIAN, *who has remained motionless, his arms crossed.*

Cyrano [*putting his hand on his shoulder*]. Christian?

Christian [*shaking his head*]. Roxane!

Cyrano. Alas!

Christian. At least, I wish
That I might put my heart's farewell entire
Into one last sweet letter!

Cyrano. I had no doubt
The end would come to-day—
[*Takes a letter from his doublet.*] And I have made
Your farewells for you.

Christian. Show it.

Cyrano. Do you wish?

Christian [*taking the letter*]. Why, yes! [*Opens it, reads and stops.*] Here?

Cyrano. What?

Christian. This little spot?

Cyrano [*taking the letter quickly and looking at it with an innocent air*]. A spot?

Christian. It is a tear.

Cyrano. Why, so it is! A poet
Is caught at his own game. That is the charm!
You understand—this note, 't is very moving;
It made me weep, myself, while writing.

Christian. Weep?

Cyrano. Why, yes; because—to die is nothing much;

But—see her ne'er again! Aye, there's the rub!
For I shall never—[CHRISTIAN *looks at him.*]
We shall ne'er—[*Sharply.*] You will—
Christian [*snatching the letter from him*]. Give me this letter.
A noise in the distance in the camp.
Voice of a Sentinel. Halt there! Who goes there?
Shots. Sounds of voices. Rattle of bells.
Carbon. What is 't?
The Sentinel [*on the rampart*]. A carriage.
Cries. What, here—in the camp?
It enters! It seems from the enemy!
Fire—No! The driver shouts—Shouts what? He shouts:
"On the King's service!"
Everyone is on the ramparts looking out. The bells approach.
De Guiche. What, the King?
They come down and fall in line.
Carbon. Hats off!
De Guiche [*from the wings*]. From the King.—Take your places, wretched rabble!
That he may enter in befitting state.
The carriage enters at full speed,—covered with mud and dust, curtains drawn, two grooms behind,—and stops short.
Carbon [*shouting*]. Beat the assembly! [*Ruffle of drums. All the* CADETS *uncover.*] Lower the step!
Two men rush forward, the door opens.
Roxane [*jumping from the carriage*]. Good morning!
The sound of a woman's voice raises the whole line, which was bowing low. Blank amazement.

SCENE V

The Same; ROXANE.

De Guiche. On the King's service! You?
Roxane. The sole King, Love!
Cyrano. Good God!
Christian [*rushing forward*]. You! Why?
Roxane. This siege was far too long.
Christian Why?
Roxane. I'll tell you.
Cyrano [*who at the sound of her voice has remained motionless, rooted to the spot, without daring to turn his eyes toward her*]. God! now dare I look at her!
De Guiche. You cannot stay here.
Roxane [*gaily*]. Oh, yes—but I can!
Will you hand me a drum? [*Sits down on a drum which is handed to her. She laughs.*] There! Many thanks.
They fired on my carriage! [*Proudly.*] A patrol!
It looks made of a pumpkin, does it not?
As in the fairy-tale; and the lackeys changed
From rats. [*Throwing a kiss to* CHRISTIAN.] Good morning! [*Looking at all of them.*] You do not look gay.
You know 't is far to Arras? [*Seeing* CYRANO.] Cousin, I'm charmed!
Cyrano [*advancing*]. But how, Madame?—
Roxane. How did I find the army?
Heavens, my friend, 'twas simple: I but went
Where'er I saw the land laid waste. Such horrors!
I should not have believed, had I not seen.

If that, sirs, be the service of your King,
Mine is far better.
Cyrano. Well, but this is mad.
Where did you pass, and how did you get through?
Roxane. Where? Through the Spanish lines!
First Cadet. An evil lot!
De Guiche. But how did you contrive to pass their lines?
Le Bret. It must have been no easy task.
Roxane. Why, yes!
I simply sent my carriage at full speed:
If a hidalgo showed his lofty air,
I merely beamed on him my sweetest smile.
And, as the Spaniards are the most gallant folk
In the world,—no offense to the French,—I passed.
Carbon. Yes, 't is a passport sure, that smile of yours.
But still they often must have asked of you
Whither you went at such a pace, Madame?
Roxane. They often did: and then I always answered:
"I go to see my lover!" Then the Spaniard,
E'en of the fiercest air, would gravely close
My carriage door,—and, with a courtly gesture
The King himself would envy, wave away
The guns already levelled at my breast;
And—gorgeous in his grace and in his pride,
While his spurs clanked beneath his mantle's train,
And his hat waved its sweeping plumes in air—
He would bow low, and say: "Pass, Señorita!"
Christian. But—
Roxane. I said, "My lover," yes; but, pardon me,—
You understand, if I had said, "My husband,"
None would have let me pass.
Christian. But—
Roxane. What's the matter?
De Guiche. You must depart.
Roxane. I?
Cyrano. Quickly.
Le Bret. Yes, at once!
Christian. Yes!
Roxane. Why?
Christian [*embarrassed*]. The fact is—
Cyrano [*same tone*]. In the next half-hour—
De Guiche [*same tone*]. About—
Carbon [*same tone*]. 'T is better—
Le Bret [*same tone*]. You might—
Roxane. I shall stay.
A battle's near!
All. Oh, no!
Roxane. This is my husband!
[*Throws herself in* CHRISTIAN'S *arms.*]
Let me be slain with him.
Christian. What eyes you have!
Roxane. I'll tell you why.
De Guiche [*in despair*]. This is a fearful post!
Roxane [*turning*]. What! fearful?
Cyrano. And in proof, he's given it
To us.
Roxane [*to* DE GUICHE]. Ah! then you wish me widowed?
De Guiche. I swear!—
Roxane. No, I am somewhat mad just now.

I shall not go away—and 't is amusing.

Cyrano. What! Has Madame become a heroine?

Roxane. Monsieur de Bergerac, I am your cousin.

A Cadet. We will defend you.

Roxane [*catching the fever more and more*]. Friends, that I believe!

Another [*in delight*]. The whole camp smells of iris.

Roxane. I have on
A hat which will look very well in battle.

[*Looking at* DE GUICHE.]

Perchance 't is time the Count should go away,—
They might begin!

De Guiche. This is too much! I go
To inspect my cannon, and return at once.
You still have time; pray change your mind.

Roxane. No, never!

[*Exit* DE GUICHE

SCENE VI

The Same; without DE GUICHE.

Christian [*pleading*]. Roxane!—

Roxane. No!

First Cadet [*to the others*]. She will stay.

All [*rushing about and jostling each other as they try to make themselves presentable.*] A comb—
A brush—
Some soap— My clothes are torn; give me a needle—
A ribbon— Here, your mirror—
Now, my gauntlets!—
Your curling-irons—and a razor,—quick!

Roxane [*to* CYRANO, *who still pleads with her*]. No,—naught shall make me stir from out this place!

Carbon [*after having, like the rest, tightened his belt, dusted his clothes brushed his hat, arranged his plume, and drawn on his gauntlets, advances towards* ROXANE *and with great ceremony*]. Perhaps it would be fitting to present,
Since the affair stands thus, these gentlemen,
Who'll have the honor to die before your eyes.

[ROXANE *bows and waits, on* CHRISTIAN'S *arm, standing.* CARBON *introduces.*]

Baron de Peyrescous de Colignac.

The Cadet [*bowing*]. Madame!

Carbon [*continuing*]. Baron de Casterac de Cahuzac;
The Vidame de Malgouyre Estressac Lésbas d' Escarabiot;
Chevalier d'Antignac-Juzet;
Baron Hillot de Blagnac-Saléchan de Castel-Crabioules.

Roxane. How many names has each of you?

Baron Hillot. A string.

Carbon. Open the hand that holds your kerchief.

Roxane [*Opens her hand and the handkerchief falls*]. Why?

The whole company rushes forward to pick it up.

Carbon [*picking it up quickly*]. My company had no standard. But, in faith,
The finest in the camp floats o'er it now!

Roxane [*smiling*]. 'T is rather small.

Carbon [*tying the kerchief to the staff of his captain's lance*]. But it is all of lace.

A Cadet [*to the others*]. I should die gladly, having seen this vision,
If I had only one small bite to eat.
Carbon [*who had heard him; indignantly*]. Shame,—speak of eating when a lady fair—
Roxane. But the camp's air is sharp,— I'm hungry too,—
Pasties, and game, and wines—that is my choice.
Will you be kind enough to bring them?
Consternation.
A Cadet. All?
Another. Good Lord! Where shall we get them?
Roxane [*tranquilly*]. In my carriage.
All. What!
Roxane. But they must be boned, and carved, and served.
Look at my coachman closer, gentlemen,
And you will recognize a very genius.
Each sauce shall be served hot, if you prefer.
The Cadets [*rushing towards the carriage*]. 'T is Ragueneau. [*Acclamations.*]
Oh, oh!
Roxane [*following them with her eyes*]. Poor boys!
Cyrano [*kissing her hand*]. Good fairy!
Ragueneau [*standing on the seat like a charlatan in a public square*]. Gentlemen—
Enthusiasm.
The Cadets. Bravo! Bravo!
Ragueneau. The Spaniards failed
To see the feast, when the feast of beauty passed.
Applause. CYRANO *talks aside to* CHRISTIAN.
Ragueneau. So taken up with gallantry they were
They never saw [*Takes from the seat a dish, which he lifts up.*] the galantine!
Applause. The galantine is passed from hand to hand.
Cyrano [*aside to* CHRISTIAN]. I beg you,
One word!
Ragueneau. And Venus so filled every eye
That secretly Diana brought away [*Brandishes a leg of venison.*]
The trophies of her hunt.
Enthusiasm. The leg is seized by twenty outstretched hands.
Cyrano [*aside to* CHRISTIAN]. I must speak with you.
Roxane [*to the* CADETS, *who come down, their arms full of provisions*]. Spread this upon the ground. [*Lays a cloth on the grass, aided by the two footmen who were behind the carriage. To* CHRISTIAN.] Make yourself useful!
CHRISTIAN *goes to help her.* CYRANO *makes a restless movement.*
Ragueneau. A truffled peacock!
First Cadet [*radiantly, coming down while cutting a large slice of ham*]. Thunder! we shall have
One royal gorge at least, before we die—
[*quickly catching himself up as he sees* ROXANE].
—A royal feast, I mean,—I beg your pardon!
Ragueneau [*tossing out the cushions of the carriage*]. The cushions are all stuffed with ortolans!
Great tumult. The cushions are ripped up. Laughter and joy.

Third Cadet. Ah!

Ragueneau [*tossing out bottles of red wine*]. Flasks of rubies! [*of white wine*]. Flasks of topaz, too!

Roxane [*throwing a folded tablecloth into Cyrano's face*]. Unfold this cloth—catch it—and look alive!

Ragueneau [*waving one of the carriage-lamps, which he has wrenched off*]. And every lantern is a little cupboard.

Cyrano [*aside to* CHRISTIAN, *while they together arrange the cloth*]. I must speak with you, ere you speak to her.

Ragueneau [*more and more rhapsodical*]. Even my whip-handle is a giant sausage!

Roxane [*pouring wine and serving*]. Since they will kill us—heavens! let us laugh
At all the rest. Everything for the Gascons!
If De Guiche come, let no one bid him sit.
[*Going from one to another.*]
There, you have time enough— don't eat so fast—
But drink a little!— Why these tears?

First Cadet. 'T is too good!—

Roxane. Tush!—red or white?—Bread for Monsieur de Carbon.
A knife—your plate!— Some champagne? Or a wing?

Cyrano [*who follows her, his arms full of plates, helping her wait*]. I love her!

Roxane [*going towards* CHRISTIAN]. You?

Christian. No, nothing.

Roxane. Yes, this biscuit,
Dipped in some muscatel,—two fingers only!

Christian [*trying to detain her*]. Oh, tell me why you came!

Roxane. My duty now
Is to these luckless lads. Hush!—in a moment.

Le Bret [*who has gone to the background, to hand up to the* SENTINEL *on the rampart a loaf of bread on the end of a lance*]. De Guiche!

Cyrano. Quick, hide the bottles, plates, and baskets!
Let us show nothing! [*To* RAGUENEAU.] Get back on your box!
Is all well hidden?

In a twinkling everything is pushed into the tents, or hidden under their clothes, their cloaks, or their hats. DE GUICHE *enters briskly—and stops suddenly, sniffing. Silence.*

SCENE VII

The Same; DE GUICHE.

De Guiche. That smells good.

A Cadet [*humming, with a preoccupied air*]. To-lo—

De Guiche [*stopping and looking at him*]. What is the matter with you? You're quite red.

The Cadet. I? Nothing—'t is my blood. —We'll fight—it starts—

Another. Poum, poum!

De Guiche [*turning*]. What's that?

The Cadet [*slightly intoxicated*]. Nothing—a little song!

De Guiche. You're gay, my lad.

The Cadet. 'T is the approach of danger.

De Guiche [*calling* CARBON DE CASTEL-JALOUX *to give an order*]. Here, Captain, I— [*Stops, looking at him.*] The deuce! you're cheerful too!

Carbon [*blushing scarlet, and hiding a bottle behind his back with furtive movement*]. Oh!

De Guiche. There is left one cannon I've had brought.

[*Points to a place in the wing.*]

There, in the corner—use it, if you need.

A Cadet [*strutting about*]. Charming attention!

Another [*smiling at him graciously*]. Kindly thoughtfulness!

De Guiche. Oh! they are mad! [*Drily.*] And being quite unused

To cannon, take good heed to the recoil.

First Cadet. Oh, pfft!

De Guiche [*going to him, furious*]. But!—

The Cadet. Gascon guns never recoil.

De Guiche [*taking him by the arm and shaking him*]. You're drunk! —on what?

The Cadet [*superbly*]. Upon the smell of powder.

De Guiche [*shrugging his shoulders, pushing him away and going quickly to* ROXANE]. Quick, Madame. What have you resolved to do?

Roxane. I stay.

De Guiche. Flee!

Roxane. No!

De Guiche. Well, since the case stands thus,

Give me a musket!

Carbon. What?

De Guiche. I also stay.

Cyrano. But, sir, this savors somewhat of bravado.

First Cadet. You are a Gascon, then, despite your lace?

De Guiche. I do not leave a woman in distress.

Second Cadet [*to the* FIRST]. Really! I think we well might give him food.

All the provisions reappear as if by magic.

De Guiche [*his eyes lighting up*]. Provisions!

Third Cadet. Yes, they came from every cloak.

De Guiche [*mastering himself, and with dignity*]. Do you then think that I will eat your leavings?

Cyrano [*bowing*]. You're making progress now.

De Guiche [*proudly*]. I shall fight fasting.

First Cadet [*exulting with delight*]. There spoke a Gascon.

De Guiche [*smiling*]. I?

The Cadet. He's one of us!

All begin to dance.

Carbon de Castel-Jaloux [*who has disappeared for a moment behind the rampart, reappearing on top*]. I've placed my lancers there, in open order.

Points out a line of pikes over the top of the rampart.

De Guiche [*to* ROXANE, *bowing*]. Will you accept my hand for the review?

She takes it, and they go toward the rampart. Everyone uncovers, and follows them.

Christian [*going to* CYRANO *quickly*]. Speak quick!

At the moment when ROXANE *appears on the top of the rampart, the lances disappear, lowered in the salute; a shout is raised; she bows.*

The Lancers [*without*]. Hurrah! Hurrah!

Christian. What was the secret?
Cyrano. If perchance Roxane—
Christian. Well!
Cyrano. Should speak to you
Of letters—
Christian. Oh, I know!—
Cyrano. Have not the folly
To show surprise.
Christian. At what?
Cyrano. Well, I must tell you—
Oh, Lord! 'twas simple, as I see to-day,
When I see her. You have—
Christian. Speak quick!
Cyrano. You have
Written her oftener than you think.
Christian. How's that?
Cyrano. I took it on myself, and was your spokesman!
I sometimes wrote, and never let you know.
Christian. Ah?
Cyrano. It was simple.
Christian. How did you contrive it?
Since the blockade—
Cyrano. Oh, I could pass ere day-break.
Christian [*folding his arms*]. And that was simple, too? How many times
A week have I then written—two? three? four?
Cyrano. Oftener.
Christian. Every day?
Cyrano. Yes—twice a day.
Christian [*violently*]. And that made you so drunk with sheer delight
That you braved death—
Cyrano [*seeing* ROXANE *returning*]. Hush! Hush! Not before her!
[*Quickly goes back into his tent*

SCENE VIII

ROXANE. CHRISTIAN *in the background.* CADETS *coming and going.* CARBON *and* DE GUICHE *give orders.*

Roxane [*running to* CHRISTIAN]. And now, Christian!—
Christian [*taking her hands*]. And now; now tell me why,
By frightful roads, through this rough soldiery,
You came to join me here?
Roxane. It was your letters!
Christian. What?
Roxane. The worse for you, if I have risked these dangers.
Your letters turned my head. Ah, think how many
You've written me this month; and every one
Was better than the last!
Christian. What, for a few
Little love-letters—
Roxane. Hush, you cannot know!
'T is true I've worshipped you since on that evening,
Beneath my window—with a voice whose tones
I had not heard before—your soul began
To make itself known to me. Well, your letters,
You see, for this past month, have been the same
As listening to your voice the livelong day,—
Your voice, as 'twas that evening, soft and tender—
Like a caress. The worse for you, I came!
For had Ulysses written words like yours
Penelope would ne'er have stayed at home

And plied her spinning-wheel; but mad like Helen
She would have sent her fleeces all apacking,
And gone to seek her husband.
Christian. But—
Roxane. I read—
I read again. I felt myself grow faint.
I was your own; and every little page
Was like a petal flying from your soul.
I felt, in each word of your burning letters,
Your love—strong and sincere.
Christian. Sincere and strong?
You felt it there, Roxane?
Roxane. Indeed, I did!
Christian. And you have come?
Roxane. Oh, Christian! Oh, my master!
(You'd raise me up if I should cast myself
Down at your knees! But 't is my soul I cast;
And you will ne'er be able to raise that up.)
I come to crave your pardon. 'T is the hour
To pray for pardon—since death stands close at hand—
For having lightly loved you at the first,
Moved only by your comeliness.
Christian [*with alarm*]. Roxane!
Roxane. Later, dear friend, growing less frivolous,—
A bird that hops before he quite can fly,—
Your soul fast holding what your looks had caught,
I loved you for them both at once!
Christian. And now?
Roxane. Now, 't is yourself that doth outshine yourself;
And for your soul alone I love you now.
Christian [*recoiling*]. Roxane!
Roxane. Be happy, then; since to be loved
For what is but the fleeting moment's dress
Must wring with pain a noble, glowing heart.
But now your well-loved thought is what I see!
The comeliness with which you pleased me first
I see more clearly—yet I see it not.
Christian. Oh!
Roxane. You have doubts of such a victory?
Christian [*sadly*]. Roxane!
Roxane. I know you cannot yet believe
This love of mine—
Christian. I care not for this love!
I would be loved more simply, for—
Roxane. For what
Women have loved in you until this hour?
Now let yourself be loved in nobler fashion!
Christian. No. Better as it was!
Roxane. You do not see!
'T is now that I love more,—that I love most.
'T is what makes you yourself that I adore;—
And even less fair—
Christian. Hush!
Roxane. I'd love you still,
If you should lose all comeliness at once—
Christian. Oh, say not so!
Roxane. 'T is what I mean!
Christian. What! ugly?

Roxane. Ugly. I swear it!
Christian. God!
Roxane. Your joy is deep?
Christian [*with smothered voice*]. Yes.
Roxane. What's the matter?
Christian [*pushing her away gently*]. Nothing,—a word,—a moment.
Roxane. But—
Christian [*pointing out a group of* CADETS *in the background*]. From these poor lads my love takes you away!
Go,—smile on them a little, ere they die—
Roxane [*much moved*].
Dear Christian!
Goes toward the GASCONS, *who crowd respectfully around her.*

SCENE IX

CHRISTIAN. CYRANO *in the background.* ROXANE *talking with* CARBON *and some* CADETS.

Christian [*calling toward* CYRANO'S *tent*]. Cyrano!
Cyrano [*reappearing, armed for battle*]. What? You are pale!
Christian. No longer does she love me!
Cyrano. What?
Christian. 'T is you.
Cyrano. No!
Christian. 'T is my soul she loves.
Cyrano. No.
Christian. Yes, 'tis so.
'T is really you she loves;—you love her, too!
Cyrano. I?
Christian. I know it!
Cyrano. It is true!
Christian. Madly!
Cyrano. Yes, more!
Christian. Tell her.
Cyrano. No!
Christian. Why not?
Cyrano. Why? Look at my face!
Christian. She'd love me—ugly.
Cyrano. Did she tell you so?
Christian. She did.
Cyrano. Ah, I am glad she told you that!
But stop,—do not believe this foolish thing.
God! I am glad she even had the thought
To say so! Do not take her at her word.
Become not ugly;—she'd bear me a grudge!
Christian. That's what I wish to see.
Cyrano. No!
Christian. Let her choose!
For you shall tell her all.
Cyrano. No, not this torture!
Christian. Shall I then kill your joy,—since I am fair?
'T is too unjust!
Cyrano. And shall I bury yours?—
Because, thanks to the hazard of my birth,
I have the gift of putting into words
That which perchance you feel?
Christian. Yes, tell her all.
Cyrano. He will insist on tempting me! 'T is sad.
Christian. I'm weary of this rival in myself.
Cyrano. Christian!
Christian. Our union—secret, all unknown—
May break, if we survive!
Cyrano. He still insists!—
Christian. I must be loved myself, or not at all!

I go to see what is on foot—I go
To the end of our lines; then I return.
Speak; let her choose between us.

Cyrano. 'T will be you.

Christian. But—that I hope. [*Calls.*] Roxane!

Cyrano. No! No!

Roxane [*running up*]. What is it?

Christian. Cyrano has important news to tell.

[*She goes quickly to* CYRANO. CHRISTIAN *goes out*

SCENE X

ROXANE, CYRANO; *then* LE BRET, CARBON DE CASTEL-JALOUX, *the* CADETS, RAGUENEAU, DE GUICHE, *etc.*

Roxane. Something important?—

Cyrano [*in desperation*]. He has gone—'Twas nothing.
He makes much out of little. You should know him
Better by this time.

Roxane [*quickly*]. He did not believe
What I just said. I saw he had his doubts.

Cyrano [*taking her hand*]. But did you, then, tell him the very truth?

Roxane. Yes, I should love him, e'en [*Hesitates a second.*]—

Cyrano [*smiling sadly*]. It troubles you
To say the word before me?

Roxane. But—

Cyrano. 'Twill not
Hurt me.— E'en ugly?

Roxane. Yes. [*Musketry without.*] Ah, there's a shot!

Cyrano. Hideous?

Roxane. Hideous!

Cyrano. Disfigured?

Roxane. Yes.

Cyrano. Grotesque?

Roxane. But naught could make him that to me!

Cyrano. You still would love him?

Roxane. Yes, and even more!

Cyrano [*losing his head. Aside*]. My God,—perhaps 'tis true; and bliss at last!
[*To* ROXANE.]
I—Roxane, listen—

Le Bret [*Entering rapidly, calls in a low voice*]. Cyrano!

Cyrano [*turning*]. What?

Le Bret. Hush!
Speaks to him inaudibly.

Cyrano [*dropping Roxane's hand with a cry*]. Ah!

Roxane. What's the matter?

Cyrano [*to himself in stupefaction*]. It is done.

Roxane. What now!
They fire?
Climbs up to look out.

Cyrano. 'Tis done. I ne'er can tell you now.

Roxane [*wishing to rush forward*]. What's going on?

Cyrano [*quickly stopping her*]. Nothing!

Some CADETS *enter, concealing something which they are carrying; and forming a group, they prevent* ROXANE *from approaching*

Roxane. These men!

Cyrano [*drawing her away*]. Let be—
I was about to tell you? Nothing, nothing!
I swear it, Madame. [*Solemnly.*] I swear that Christian's spirit

And Christian's soul were—[*stopping himself in alarm*]—are the greatest—

Roxane. Were?

[*With a great cry.*] Oh! [*Rushes forward and scatters every one.*]

Cyrano. It is done!

Roxane [*seeing* CHRISTIAN *wrapped in his cloak*]. Christian!

Le Bret [*to* CYRANO]. The foe's first fire!

ROXANE *throws herself on Christian's body. More firing. Rattling of arms. Drums.*

Carbon [*sword in hand*]. 'Tis the attack! To arms!

Followed by the CADETS, *he goes to the other side of the rampart.*

Roxane. Christian!

Carbon's Voice [*behind the rampart*]. Make haste.

Roxane. Christian!

Carbon. *Fall in!*

Roxane. Christian!

Carbon. *Measure—fuses!*

RAGUENEAU *runs up, with water in a helmet.*

Christian [*with dying voice*]. Roxane!

Cyrano [*quick and aside in Christian's ear; while* ROXANE *distractedly dips into the water a piece of linen torn from her breast to bathe his wounds*]. I have told all. She loves thee still.

CHRISTIAN *closes his eyes.*

Roxane. What is't, my love?

Carbon. *Draw ramrods!*

Roxane [*to* CYRANO]. Is he dead?

Carbon. *Bite charges! Ready! Load!*

Roxane. I feel his cheek Grow cold against my own.

Carbon. *Take aim!*

Roxane. A letter Upon him! [*Opens it.*] 'Tis for me.

Cyrano [*aside*]. My letter!

Carbon. *Fire!*

Musketry, shouts, noise of battle.

Cyrano [*trying to disengage his hand; which* ROXANE *holds, kneeling*]. Roxane, the fight is on!

Roxane [*holding him back*]. Stay yet awhile. He's dead. You were the only one who knew him.

[*Weeps softly.*]

—Was he not wonderful?—a chosen being?

Cyrano [*standing bareheaded*]. Yes, Roxane.

Roxane. And a poet to adore?

Cyrano. Yes, Roxane.

Roxane. And a lofty spirit?

Cyrano. Yes.

Roxane. A mighty heart, undreamt of by the crowd,— A glorious soul and charming?

Cyrano [*stoutly*]. Yes, Roxane!

Roxane [*throwing herself on Christian's body*]. He's dead!

Cyrano [*aside, drawing his sword*]. And only death is left for me— Since she mourns me in him, and knows it not.

Trumpets in the distance.

De Guiche [*reappearing on the rampart, helmet off, wounded in the forehead; with thundering voice*]. The promised signal! Hear the blaring brass! The French will quickly reach the camp with food! Hold hard a moment longer.

Roxane. On his letter Are blood and tears!

A Voice Without [*shouting*]. Surrender!

Cadets' Voices. No!

Ragueneau [*perched on his carriage, watching the battle over the rampart*]. The danger
Grows greater.

Cyrano [*to* DE GUICHE, *pointing out* ROXANE]. Take her hence. I'll join the charge.

Roxane [*kissing the letter, with dying voice*]. His blood! His tears!

Ragueneau [*leaping from the carriage to run towards her*]. She's fainted!

De Guiche [*on the rampart, to the* CADETS, *in fury*]. Hold your ground!

A Voice [*without*]. Lower your arms!

Cadets' Voices. No!

Cyrano [*to* DE GUICHE]. You have fairly proved
Your courage, sir, already. [*Pointing to* ROXANE.] Flee, and save her!

De Guiche [*Runs to* ROXANE, *and carries her away in his arms*]. So be it! But we still may win the day
If you gain time.

Cyrano. 'T is well! [*Calling to* ROXANE, *whom* DE GUICHE, *with Ragueneau's help, carries off in a faint.*] Farewell, Roxane!

Confusion; shouts. CADETS *reappear, wounded, and fall upon the stage.* CYRANO, *rushing into the battle, is stopped on top of the rampart by* CARBON, *covered with blood.*

Carbon. Our line is broken! I have had two wounds!

Cyrano [*shouting to the* GASCONS]. Stand fast! Hold hard, my lads! [*To* CARBON, *whom he holds up.*] Be not afraid.
Two deaths I must avenge: my friend, —my joy!

[*They descend.* CYRANO *brandishes the lance on which is fastened Roxane's kerchief.*]
Float, little flag of lace that bears her name.

[*Plants it in the ground, and shouts to the* CADETS.]
Fall on them! Crush them down! [*To the* Fifer.] And blow your fife.

The Fifer *plays. The wounded raise themselves.* CADETS, *climbing up the rampart, rally around* CYRANO *and the little flag. The carriage, transformed into a redoubt, is covered and filled with men, and bristles with arquebuses.*

A Cadet [*appearing on top of the rampart, in retreat, but still fighting, shouts.*] They scale the rampart!

Falls dead.

Cyrano. Give them a salute!

The rampart is crowded in a moment with a terrible array of the enemy. The great Imperial standards appear.

Cyrano. Fire!

General volley.

A Shout in the Enemy's Ranks. Fire!

Murderous reply. The CADETS *fall on every side.*

A Spanish Officer [*uncovering*]. Who are these, who all court death!

Cyrano [*reciting, erect in the midst of the bullets.*]

> These be Cadets of Gascony,—
> Carbon de Castel-Jaloux's men.
> They fight, they lie full shamelessly,—

[*Darts forward, followed by a few survivors.*]

> —These be Cadets—

The rest is lost in the battle.

CURTAIN.

FIFTH ACT

Cyrano's Gazette

Fifteen years after, in 1655. The park of the convent occupied by the Sisters of the Cross, at Paris. Superb foliage. To the left, the house; a great terrace upon which several doors open. An enormous tree in the centre of the stage, standing alone in the middle of a little oval opening. To the right, in the foreground, among boxwood bushes, a semicircular stone bench. The rear of the stage is crossed by an avenue of chestnuts; which leads on the right (in the background) to the door of a chapel, half seen through the branches. Through the double curtain of trees formed by this avenue are seen stretches of lawn, other avenues, small groves; the perspective of the park; the sky. A little side door of the chapel opens on a colonnade, garlanded with reddened vines, the colonnade disappearing on the right in the foreground, behind the box. It is autumn. The foliage shows yellow above the green lawns. Dark spots of box and yew trees, still green. A circle of dead leaves under each tree. The leaves are scattered over the whole stage, crackle under foot in the avenues, and half cover the terrace and the benches. Between the bench on the right and the tree stands a large embroidery-table, in front of which a low chair has been placed. Baskets full of skeins and worsteds. A piece of embroidery already begun. When the curtain rises, Sisters *are coming and going in the park; some are seated on the bench around an older nun. The leaves are falling.*

Scene I

Mother Margaret, Sister Martha, Sister Claire; *Other* Sisters.

Sister Martha [*to* Mother Margaret]. Sister Claire glanced i' the mirror twice, to see
How sat her headdress.

Mother Margaret [*to* Sister Claire]. It is very ugly.

Sister Claire. But I saw Sister Martha steal a plum,
This morning, from the tart.

Mother Margaret [*to* Sister Martha]. A naughty deed!

Sister Claire. But such a little look!

Sister Martha. So small a plum!

Mother Margaret. I'll tell Monsieur Cyrano all, to-night.

Sister Claire [*alarmed*]. No, he will mock us.

Sister Martha. He will call the nuns
Very coquettish—

Sister Claire. Very fond of sweets—

Mother Margaret [*smiling*]. And very good.

Sister Claire. But, mother, is't not so,—
He's come each Saturday these ten years past?

Mother Margaret. Yes, longer! Ever since his cousin joined
Her worldly mourning to our linen robes,
And sought for peace with us,—fourteen years since;
Like some great black-plumed bird 'mid our white flock.

Sister Martha. He only, since she first took refuge here,
Can charm away her never-lessening grief.

All the Sisters. He is so merry—
'T is cheerful when he comes—

He teases us— He's kind— We like him well—
We must prepare for him our choicest sweets—
Sister Martha. But yet he is not a good Catholic!
Sister Claire. We shall convert him.
The Sisters. Yes, yes!
Mother Margaret. I forbid!
That is a task you must not undertake.
Trouble him not. He might come less, perchance.
Sister Martha. But— God—
Mother Margaret. Be not disturbed! God knows him well!
Sister Martha. Yet every Saturday he proudly tells me,
When he comes in, "I feasted yesterday!"
Mother Margaret. He tells you that!— The last time that he came,
Food had not passed his lips for two whole days.
Sister Martha. Mother!
Mother Margaret. He's poor.
Sister Martha. Who told you?
Mother Margaret. Monsieur le Bret.
Sister Martha. He gets no help?
Mother Margaret. No, that would anger him.

[*In an avenue in the background* Roxane *appears, dressed in black, with a widow's cap and long veil;* De Guiche, *very elegant, but growing old, walks near her. They approach slowly.* Mother Margaret *rises.*]

We must retire—Madame Madeleine
Is walking with a stranger in the park.
Sister Martha [*aside to* Sister Claire]. The Duc de Grammont?
Sister Claire [*looking*]. Yes, I think it is.
Sister Martha. He has not come to see her for these months.
The Sisters. He's busy—with the Court—the Field—
Sister Claire. The World!

[*They go out.* De Guiche *and* Roxane *come down in silence, and stop near the embroidery-table. An interval*

Scene II

Roxane, *the* Duc de Grammont [*formerly* Comte de Guiche]; *then* Le Bret, *and* Ragueneau.

The Duke. And you will stay here ever—vainly fair,
And always mourning?
Roxane. Always!
The Duke. Faithful still?
Roxane. Still faithful.
The Duke [*after an interval*]. And you have forgiven me?
Roxane. Since I am here.
The Duke. He was a noble soul.
Roxane. You should have known him.
The Duke. Ah? Perhaps I should.
Perhaps I never knew him well enough.
Do you still wear his letter next your heart?
Roxane. Like some dear relic, on this velvet band.
The Duke. You love him, e'en in death?
Roxane. Sometimes it seems
He is not wholly dead,—our hearts still meet,
His living love hovers about me still.
The Duke [*after another silence*]. Cyrano comes to see you?
Roxane. Often, yes.
He is for me a journal—this old friend,—

He comes at such a time. His chair is placed
Under this tree, whene'er the weather's fine.
I ply my needle, and I wait for him.
The clock strikes: and at the last stroke I hear—
For I no longer even turn my head—
His stick upon the steps. He seats himself;
He jests at my eternal needlework;
He tells me the week's doings. [LE BRET *appears on the steps.*]
Oh, Le Bret!
[LE BRET *descends.*]
How is our friend?
Le Bret. Ill!
The Duke. Oh!
Roxane [*to the* DUKE]. He tells it large.
Le Bret. 'T is all as I foretold. Alone and wretched—
His letters ever winning him new foes—
He levels his attacks at every sham:
Sham nobles,— hypocrites,— sham heroes,—wit
Stolen from others;—in short, at all the world.
Roxane. But his sword still inspires a mighty dread;
No one will get the best of him.
The Duke [*shaking his head*]. Who knows?
Le Bret. But what I fear is not fair, open fight.
'T is solitude and hunger—winter cold,
Ent'ring his humble room with wolf-life tread,—
Such are the murderers who'll be his death.
—For every day he tighter draws his belt;
His nose is like some piece of antique ivory;
He has one single coat, of wretched black.
The Duke. Oh, he's no upstart rich! It is as well!
Waste not your pity on him!
Le Bret [*with a bitter smile*]. But, my Lord!
The Duke. Waste not your pity on him; he has lived
Without concessions, free in thought and deed.
Le Bret [*as before*]. Your Grace—
The Duke [*haughtily*]. I know I've all things; he has naught,—
But I would gladly grasp him by the hand.
[*Bowing to* ROXANE]. Adieu!
Roxane. I will attend you.
THE DUKE *bows to* LE BRET, *and turns toward the steps with* ROXANE.
The Duke [*stopping while she ascends*]. Yes, sometimes
I envy him. You see, when all one's life
Has brought too much success, too lightly won,
He feels—though he has done no downright wrong—
A thousand petty quarrels with himself,
Which all combined together only make
A dull disgust with life—yet not remorse;
And while one mounts the steps of worldly state,
Even the ermined mantle of a duke
Drags after it a host of vain regrets
And dead illusions; even as your gown—
While you mount slowly upward to these doors—

Drags after it the rustling fallen leaves.
Roxane [*ironically*]. Are you a dreamer?
The Duke. Yes! [*Just as he is going out, quickly.*] Monsieur Le Bret!
[*To* ROXANE.]
By your leave? A word.
[*Approaches* LE BRET, *and in an undertone.*] 'T is true, no one would dare
Attack your friend,—but many hate him well:
And yesterday they told me, at the Queen's,
"This Cyrano might die by some mishap!"
Le Bret. Ah?
The Duke. Let him go out seldom, and be cautious.
Le Bret [*lifting his arms toward heaven*]. Cautious! He's coming. I shall warn him—But!—
Roxane [*who has remained on the steps, to a* SISTER *who advances towards her*]. What?
The Sister. Ragueneau would see you, Madame.
Roxane. Bid him enter.
[*To the* DUKE *and* LE BRET.]
He comes to tell his woes. Having set out
To be an author, he has been in turn Singer—
Le Bret. Bath-keeper—
Roxane. Actor—
Le Bret. Beadle—
Roxane. Barber—
Le Bret. Lute-player—
Roxane. And what will he be to-day?
Ragueneau [*entering hurriedly.*] Ah, Madame! [*Sees* LE BRET.] Sir!
Roxane [*smiling*]. Now you can tell your troubles
To Le Bret; I'll return.
Ragueneau. But, Madame—
[ROXANE *goes out, without hearing him, with the* DUKE. *He turns towards* LE BRET

SCENE III

LE BRET, RAGUENEAU.

Ragueneau. Well,
Since you are here, 'tis best she should not know—
As I was on my way to see your friend,
And still some twenty paces from his door,
I saw him coming out. I went to meet him,
And as he turned the corner of the street,
From out a window, under which he passed,
A lackey dropped a stave—By chance? Perhaps!
Le Bret. The cowards—Cyrano!
Ragueneau. I came and saw—
Le Bret. Frightful!
Ragueneau. Our friend, Monsieur, —our noble poet,
There on the ground, a great wound in his head.
Le Bret. He's dead?
Ragueneau. No, but—Good God!—I bore him
Up to his room. His room! Oh, you should see
His wretched pallet!
Le Bret. He is suffering?
Ragueneau. No, sir, he is unconscious.
Le Bret. A physician?
Ragueneau. One came by courtesy.
Le Bret. Poor Cyrano!
We must not tell this all at once to Roxane.
What did the doctor say?
Ragueneau I hardly know.

He talked of fever; he spoke of the brain—
Oh, you should see him—his poor bandaged head!
Come quickly, there is no one at his side;
And if he rises, sir, he's like to die.

Le Bret [*drawing him toward the right*]. This way, 'tis shorter—through the chapel—come!

Roxane [*appearing on the steps, and seeing* LE BRET *departing by the colonnade leading to the little door of the chapel*]. Monsieur Le Bret! [LE BRET *and* RAGUENEAU *escape without answering.*] He goes when he is called!
'T is some new history of poor Ragueneau's.

[*Descends the steps*

SCENE IV

ROXANE, *alone; then, for a moment, two* SISTERS.

Roxane. This last September day is very fair.
My sadness smiles,—in April wrapt in gloom,
But of a brighter hue when autumn comes.
[*Seats herself at her work. Two* SISTERS *come out of the house, and carry a large armchair under the tree.*]
Here's the historic chair where my old friend
Will take his seat.

Sister Martha. It is the best we have.

Roxane. I thank you, Sister. [THE SISTERS *withdraw.*] He will come. [*Takes her seat. The clock strikes.*] The clock
Is striking—my embroid'ry—It has struck.
I am amazed. Will he for once be late?
The Sister at the gate—Where is my thimble?
—Must be exhorting him to penitence.
I've found it now—[*An interval.*] She is exhorting him.
He cannot tarry long— A fallen leaf!
[*With her finger she brushes away a leaf that has fallen on her work.*]
Besides, nothing could keep him—Now, my scissors?
Here in my bag.

A Sister [*appearing on the steps*]. Monsieur de Bergerac.

SCENE V

ROXANE, CYRANO; *and, a moment later,* SISTER MARTHA.

Roxane [*without turning*]. What was I saying?
[*She sews.* CYRANO *appears, very pale, with his hat pulled down over his eyes. A* SISTER *ushers him in and retires. He starts to walk slowly down the steps, making a visible effort to hold himself erect, and leaning on his stick.* ROXANE *works at her embroidery.*]
Ah, these faded shades!
Into what pattern shall I fashion them?
[*To* CYRANO, *in tones of friendly scolding.*]
Late—for the first time in full fourteen years!

Cyrano [*reaching the arm-chair, and sitting down; speaking with a cheerful voice, in contrast to his expression*]. Yes, 'tis absurd, I am beside myself.
I was detained.

Roxane. By what?
Cyrano. Oh, by a most
Untimely visitation!
Roxane. By some churl
Troubling you with importunate demands?
Cyrano. Yes, cousin, and I soon must do his bidding.
Roxane. You bade him go?
Cyrano. Yes. "This is Saturday,"
I said: "a day when surely, rain or shine,
I must betake me to a certain house
And pay a visit there. So come again
Within an hour."
Roxane [*lightly*]. Well, this friend of yours
Will have to wait for you a longer time—
I shall not let you go till evening falls.
Cyrano. But I may be constrained to go away
A little sooner.
He closes his eyes, and is silent for a moment. SISTER MARTHA *crosses the park, from the chapel to the steps.* ROXANE *sees her, and signals to her with a little nod of her head.*
Roxane [*to* CYRANO]. Oh! You will not tease
Poor Sister Martha?
Cyrano [*smartly, opening his eyes*]. Yes, I think I shall
[*With a big, comical voice.*] Sister, come here!
[*The* SISTER *glides towards him.*] Ha, ha! You carry still
Your bright eyes always lowered!
Sister Martha [*lifting her eyes with a smile.*]. But—[*Sees his appearance, and makes a movement of surprise*]. Oh!
Cyrano [*aside, indicating* ROXANE]. Hush!
'T is nothing. [*In a voice of burlesque boasting.*] Yesterday I made a feast!
Sister Martha. I understand. [*Aside.*] That's why he is so pale.
[*In a quick aside to* CYRANO.]
Come to the dining-hall, and you shall take
A fine great bowl of broth. You will come, now?
Cyrano. Yes, yes; of course.
Sister Martha. Now, I am glad to see
That for this once you can be reasonable.
Roxane [*hearing them whispering*]. She's trying to convert you?
Sister Martha. No, not I!
Cyrano. Yes, that is true! And yet the pious words
Fall from your lips in such a plenteous flow
I am amazed you do not preach to me.
[*With mock anger.*]
Thunder and Mars! I shall amaze you, too,
For I shall suffer you this very night—
[*Pretends to be looking for a subject of raillery and to find it.*]
-To pray for me at chapel!
Roxane. Oh, oh, oh!
Cyrano [*laughing*]. The Sister's stricken dumb.
Sister Martha [*gently*]. I waited not
For your permission.
[*Retires*
Cyrano [*turning to* ROXANE, *who bends over her work.*] When shall I see the end
Of this interminable needlework?
Roxane. I waited for that jest.
At this moment, a puff of wind starts the leaves falling.
Cyrano. Look at the leaves.

Roxane [*raising her head, and looking far off through the vista*]. They are Venetian yellow. Watch them fall.

Cyrano. Yes, watch them well—how gracefully they fall!

And in their journey short, from branch to earth,
How they put on a final fleeting charm!
And, although loath to molder on the ground,
They strive to give their fall the grace of flight!

Roxane. What, are you sad?

Cyrano [*remembering himself*]. No, not at all, Roxane.

Roxane. Let the leaves fall, and tell me all the news,—

My journal!

Cyrano. Here it is.

Roxane. Ah!

Cyrano [*growing paler and paler, and struggling against his pain*]. Saturday,
The nineteenth of the month, His Majesty,
Having partaken of too many sweets,
Suffered a touch of fever, and was bled.
His illness was found guilty of high treason;
And now his august pulse is calm again!
At the Queen's ball, on Sunday, there were burned
Wax candles seven hundred sixty-three!
They say our troops beat John of Austria!
Four witches have been hanged! The little dog
Of Madame Athis needed medicine—

Roxane. Monsieur de Bergerac, will you be still!

Cyrano. Nothing on Monday, but Lygdamire's new lover;—

Roxane. Oh!

Cyrano. Tuesday the whole Court went to Fontainebleau;—

Wednesday De Fiesque had "No" from La Montglat;—
Thursday Mancini is Queen of France —almost!—
Friday La Montglat to De Fiesque said "Yes;"
And on the twenty-sixth, on Saturday—

Closes his eyes; his head drops. Silence.

Roxane [*surprised at hearing nothing more, turns, looks at him; and getting up in fright*]. He's fainted? [*Rushes towards him, exclaiming*]. Cyrano!

Cyrano [*opening his eyes; with muffled voice*]. What is it? What?

[*Sees* ROXANE *leaning over him; quickly settles his hat on his head, and draws back in alarm in his chair.*]

No, no! 'T is nothing, nothing! Let me be!

Roxane. Yet—

Cyrano. 'T is my wound—from Arras—which at times—
You know—

Roxane. Poor friend—

Cyrano. 'T is naught. 'T will pass. [*Smiles, with an effort.*] It has passed!

Roxane. Each of us has his wound; and I have mine,—
An ancient wound that never heals,—just here.
[*Lays her hand on her breast.*]
Here!—'neath this letter, with its yellowing folds!
Where still you see commingled blood and tears.

Twilight begins to fall.

Cyrano. His letter! Once I think you promised me
That I might some day read it—
Roxane. Do you wish?—
Cyrano. Yes, 'tis my wish, to-day—
Roxane [*giving him the little bag which hangs about her neck*]. Here—
Cyrano [*taking it*]. I may open?
Roxane. Open and read.
She returns to her work, folds it, and arranges her worsteds.
Cyrano [*reading*]:

"Farewell, Roxane, my death is very near!"

Roxane [*stopping in astonishment*]. Aloud?
Cyrano.

"This very night, my best-beloved,
My soul is heavy with unuttered love;
And now I die; and never, nevermore,
Shall my eyes feast on you their yearning gaze!"

Roxane. But how you read his letter—with what voice!
Cyrano.

"Drunk with your beauty; kissing as they flit
Each little graceful movement that you make;
And one familiar gesture still I see—
The way you touched your forehead!"

Roxane. How you read
This letter!
Night falls imperceptibly.
Cyrano.

"And I fain would cry aloud 'Farewell!'"

Roxane. You read—
Cyrano.

"My dearest! Oh, my love!
My treasure"—

Roxane. With a voice—
Cyrano.

"My best-beloved"—

Roxane. A voice that I have somewhere heard before.
Approaches softly, without his noticing it; goes behind his chair, leans over quietly, and looks at the letter. The darkness deepens.
Cyrano.

"My heart has never left you for a breath;
And here, and in the world beyond the grave,
I am he whose love for you passed every bound."

Roxane [*laying her hand on his shoulder*]. But how can you read now? The night has come.
[*He starts, turns; sees her close to him; makes a startled gesture, lowers his head. A long silence. Then, after it has become quite dark, she says slowly, clasping her hands.*]
And for these fourteen years he's played this part
Of the old friend who comes to cheer me up.
Cyrano. Roxane!
Roxane. 'T was you!—
Cyrano. Ah, no, Roxane; not I!
Roxane. I should have guessed it, when he spoke my name.
Cyrano. Ah, no! It was not I.
Roxane. 'T was you.
Cyrano. I swear—
Roxane. At last I see it all—the generous cheat!
You wrote the letters—
Cyrano. No!
Roxane. The dear mad words
Were yours—
Cyrano. No!
Roxane. The voice that night was yours.
Cyrano. I swear it was not!
Roxane. And the soul was yours.

Cyrano. I loved you not!
Roxane. You loved me—
Cyrano. It was he—
Roxane. You loved me!
Cyrano. No.
Roxane. But now you speak more soft.
Cyrano. No, no; my best-beloved, I loved you not.
Roxane. How many things since then have come and gone!
Why have you held your peace for fourteen years?
Since on this letter, which was naught to him,
These tears were yours?
Cyrano. But the blood was his
Roxane. Then why to-day should you decide to break
This noble silence?
Cyrano. Why?
Enter LE BRET *and* RAGUENEAU, *running.*

SCENE VI

The Same; LE BRET *and* RAGUENEAU.

Le Bret. What madness! I was sure— There he is!
Cyrano [*smiling and straightening up*]. Why, yes; of course!
Le Bret. Madame, he's killed himself By rising.
Roxane. But just now, this weakness—
Cyrano. True,
My news was not yet finished: Saturday,
The twenty-sixth, an hour before he dined,
Monsieur de Bergerac was foully murdered.
Uncovers. His head is seen to be bandaged.
Roxane. What says he? Cyrano! Look at his head,
Wrapped in a bandage! Oh! what have they done
To you! Why?
Cyrano. "*By the good sword's thrust,*
Struck by a hero, fall with point in heart!"—
Yes, I said that. But Destiny's a mocker.
And here I am, caught by a coward's trick;
Struck from behind; felled by a faggot's blow
Wielded by hireling hands,—indeed 'tis well:
I shall have failed in all things—e'en in death.
Ragueneau. Oh, sir!
Cyrano. What are you doing now, my colleague?
Ragueneau. I now am candle-snuffer—for Molière.
Cyrano. Molière?
Ragueneau. But I shall surely leave to-morrow!
Yes, I am angry with him. Yesterday
"Scapin" was acted; and I plainly saw
He'd stolen a scene from you—
Le Bret. A scene entire!
Ragueneau. The famous—"What the devil did he there?"
Le Bret. Molière stole it from you!
Cyrano. Tush! He's done well!
The scene went off, I trust, with good effect?
Ragueneau [*sobbing*]. Oh, sir, they laughed, they laughed!
Cyrano. Yes, all my life
My part has been to prompt—and be forgot.
[*To* ROXANE.]
Rememberest thou the night when Christian wooed,

Under the balcony?— All my life is there!
While I remained below, hid in the dark,
Others have climbed to kisses and to fame!
'T is just; and on the threshold of my tomb,
I own Molière a genius—Christian fair.
[*At this moment the chapel-bell rings, and the nuns are seen passing through the avenue in the background, going to mass.*]
Their bell has sounded; let them go to prayers.
Roxane [*rising to call for help*]. Come! Sister, Sister!
Cyrano. No, no! Go for no one.
When you return, I shall have gone away.
[*The nuns have entered the chapel. The organ plays.*]
Music was all I needed—there it is!
Roxane. I love you! Live!
Cyrano. No, in the fairy-tale
'T is plainly written that when the humbled Prince
Had heard the words—"I love you," his disguise
Of horror fled like snow before the sun:
But you will see that I remain the same.
Roxane. And I have wrought your sorrow—even I!
Cyrano. You? No, not you! 'T is quite the opposite.
I ne'er knew woman's kindness. E'en my mother
Thought me not fair. I never had a sister.
Then I feared sweethearts with their mocking eyes!
But, thanks to you, I've had at least a friend;
And through my life a woman's robe has passed.
Le Bret [*pointing out the moonbeams falling through the branches*]. There comes your other friend to see you.
Cyrano [*smiling at the moon*]. Yes!
Roxane. I loved but one—and now I lose him twice.
Cyrano. Le Bret, I'm going,—up to the shining moon,
And need devise no engine for this flight!
Roxane. What did you say?
Cyrano. Yes, it is there, on high,
There am I sent to make my paradise.
More than one soul I love is exiled there:
Socrates—Galileo. I'll find them all.
Le Bret [*rebelliously*]. No, no! 'T is too absurd! 'T is too unjust!
So great a poet! Such a noble heart!
To die this way! To die—
Cyrano. Hear Le Bret scold!
Le Bret [*bursting into tears*]. Dear friend!
Cyrano [*rising, his eyes wandering*]. "*These be Cadets of Gascony*"—
The elemental substance— Yes—the "*hic.*"
Le Bret. List to his science, even in his ravings.
Cyrano. Copernicus said—
Roxane. Oh!
Cyrano. "What did he there?
And what the devil did he in the galley?"

Philosopher, physician,
Poet, swordsman, and musician,
And a traveller through the heavens to to the moon!

His sword-point always ready,
His sword-arm always steady,
And a lover to whom love was not a boon!

Here lies Hercule-Savinien de Cyrano de Bergerac;
All things in turn he tried; and all things did he lack!

But pardon—I must go, I may not wait:
You see the moonbeams come to take me hence!
[*Falls back into his seat. Roxane's tears bring him back to realities. He looks at her, and caresses her veil.*]
I would not have you shed one tear the less
For Christian—fair and noble. All I ask
Is, when my body shall lie cold in death,
You give a double meaning to these weeds—
And let his mourning be my mourning too!

Roxane. I swear it!

Cyrano [*Shaken with a great tremor, rises quickly.*] No, not there! Not in a chair!

[*They rush towards him.*]

Let no one hold me up. [*Leans against the tree.*] Only the tree—[*Silence.*]
He comes! I feel already shod with stone,
And gloved with lead. [*Stiffens himself.*] But since he's on the way,
I'll meet him standing upright—[*Draws his sword.*]—sword in hand—

Le Bret. Cyrano!

Roxane [*fainting*]. Cyrano!

All draw back in terror.

Cyrano. He sees my nose!
Well! Let the flat-nose look me in the face!
[*Raises his sword.*]
You say 't is useless? That I know full well!
But I have never fought with hope to win.
No,—it is finer when 't is all in vain.
Now, who are these—a thousand thronged about me?
I know you well— You are all ancient foes:
Falsehood! [*Strikes with his sword in the air.*] There, there! Ha, ha! And Compromise!
Bigotry! Cowardice! [*Strikes.*] Shall I make terms?
No, never! never! There is Folly, too!
I knew that in the end you'd lay me low.
No matter. Let me fight! and fight! and fight!
[*Swings his sword in circles, and stops, panting.*]
You snatch them all away—laurel and rose!
Snatch on! One thing is left in spite of you,
Which I take with me: and this very night,
When I shall cross the threshold of God's house,
And enter, bowing low, this I shall take
Despite you, without wrinkle, without spot—
[*Rushes forward with brandished sword.*]
And that is—

The sword falls from his hands. He staggers, and falls into the arms of LE BRET *and* RAGUENEAU.

Roxane [*leaning over him, and kissing his forehead*]. What?

Cyrano [*Opens his eyes, recognizes her, and says with a smile*]. My stainless soldier's crest!

CURTAIN.

JUAREZ AND MAXIMILIAN[1]

A DRAMATIC HISTORY IN THREE PHASES AND THIRTEEN PICTURES

FRANZ WERFEL

TRANSLATED BY

RUTH LANGNER

CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

CLARK, *war correspondent for the* N. Y. Herald
ELIZEA, *secretary to President Juarez*
CITY DEPUTY OF CHIHUAHUA
MARIANO ESCOBEDO
PORFIRIO DIAZ
RIVA-PALACIO
MAXIMILIAN
CAPTAIN MIGUEL LOPEZ
DOCTOR BASCH
GRILL (*Servant*)
MADAME BARRIO, *Lady in Waiting*
STATE COUNCILOR STEPHEN HERZFIELD, *childhood friend of Maximilian*
CARLOTTA
ARCHBISHOP LABASTIDA OF MEXICO AND PUEBLA
THEODOSIO LARES
LAWYER SILICEO
GENERAL TOMAS MEJIA
FRANÇOIS ACHILLE BAZAINE, *Marshal of France*
EDOUARD PIERRON, *Aide to Bazaine*
LITTLE ITURBIDE, *three years old*
BLASIO, *the private secretary to the Emperor*
GENERAL MARQUEZ
GENERAL MIRAMON
CORPORAL WIMBERGER
YAPITAN
POLYPHEMIO
PRINCESS AGNES SALM
JOSÉ RINCON GALLARDO
OFFICIAL
CANON SORIA

Members of the Imperial Council of State; Imperial officers and soldiers; Juarist officers, soldiers and officials; citizens.

FIRST PHASE

1st Picture: *Government seat of Benito Juarez at Chihuahua, Mexico.*
2nd Picture: *Terrace of the Imperial Pleasure Palace at Chapultapec.*
3rd Picture: *Council Room in the Imperial Palace in Mexico City.*
4th Picture: *An Audience Chamber in the Imperial Palace in Mexico City.*

SECOND PHASE

(Nine months later)

5th Picture: *Same as fourth picture.*
6th Picture: *Headquarters of the Republican Eastern Army at Tlapa.* (*Five months later.*)
7th Picture: *In the Palace of the Emperor. Workroom.*
8th Picture: *Same as seventh picture.* (*Two months later.*)

THIRD PHASE

(Four months later)

9th Picture: *Bell Mound at Queretaro.*
10th Picture: *The Emperor's Headquarters in the Monastery of La Cruz in Queretaro.*
11th Picture: *Government seat of President Juarez at San Luis Potosi.*
12th Picture: *Maximilian's Cell in the Capuchin Monastery at Queretaro.*

EPILOGUE

13th Picture: *Before the Capuchin Church at Queretaro.*

TIME—*From the Autumn of 1865 to the Summer of 1867.*
PLACE—*Mexico*

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FIRST PHASE

First Picture

Scene: *Government seat of Benito Juarez, the republican President, at Chihuahua in northern Mexico. A bare and rather dilapidated government office which dates back to the Spanish Régime. High, deep, arched windows rear. The broken panes are mended with paper, the walls covered with placards, manifestos and edicts which always end with the capital-lettered battle cry:* "Long live the rightful republic." *Left, a door upholstered with hastily arranged mattresses. Right is a big door to the outer corridor. An official desk-table is pulled up to the light and the president's secretary,* Lawyer Elizea, *sits at it working. On the wooden bench where people sit and wait the* City Deputy of Chihuahua *is hunched, staring motionless.* Clark, *the war correspondent for the* New York Herald, *paces up and down very much at his ease, smoking a cigar. As the curtain rises there is a murmur of voices from two men seated on the bench alongside the* City Deputy.

Clark. This honored and revered Señor Benito Juarez seems to be a myth. [Elizea *shrugs to show he can't help him.* Clark, *in his quick sharp speech*]: I have the most urgent letters of introduction from Washington. As if I needed any recommendations. They're a blot on my fifteen years' work as an honorable reporter. At first I thought it made the whole thing too easy for me and now I've been trailing along on this secret retreat of the legitimate government. From San Luis to Saltillo, from Saltillo to Monterey, back from the sea to this dump that nobody can pronounce, Chi—

Elizea. Chihuahua! Pronounce it just like your Chicago—

Clark. Chicago isn't anything like this. And why this retreat? Bazaine is a long way off. No fighting, no thrills, no adventure for us. I'm struggling for an interview with the *Citizen-President* for my paper. Interview! I can't even get a look at Mr. Juarez for love or money. *Is* there really such a person?

Eliz. The President wants to be left alone. He works day and night.

Clark. Say, look here—my boss is writing me threatening letters. The public wants action, instead of description of scenery. The stories of the most important battles of our war came north without any trouble. And here I am in Mexico with nothing to report. I might lose my job if you don't manage this interview for me, Mr. Elizea.

Eliz. Patience! The Generals are still with the President.

Clark. They've been with him two hours already and the Cabinet was in there twice as long.

Eliz. They are making big decisions. Time is short. They must leave again tonight. They come from far away.

Clark. From where? Who knows? He's a genius at retreat, anyway, Mr. Juarez . . . why didn't he smother this upstart invasion at Vera Cruz at the time it landed? Wipe out transportation, rip up the roads, stay where he was and let the French rot with yellow fever. That would have

been the right idea. But he just throws away his chances, deserts the harbor fort without a shot, and leaves the door open for Louis Napoleon's pack of red-pants and that conceited Hapsburg.

Eliz. [*still working*]. You must let diseases ripen.

Clark. Yes, if you insist on dying of them. Monarchy, my honored lawyer friend, is a dangerous thing for people who lack culture. There's too much ceremony about it.

Eliz. There was another man who thought himself big enough to be Emperor of Mexico. Seven soldiers' bullets settled him.

Clark. Iturbide. He also was a military parvenu, an outsider. Maximilian, my dear sir, is a Hapsburg, a brother or cousin of every monarch in Europe. That sort of thing makes an impression here—just give them a little legitimacy and court glitter.

Eliz. Legitimacy? Montezuma, too, a true Emperor of Mexico, died by the arrows of his Indian subjects.

Clark [*Stops his pacing*]. Don Benito Juarez is an Indian, isn't he? An Aztec?

The City Deputy [*Who has stared motionlessly before him till now, rises and devoutly presses his sombrero to his breast. He is a deeply tanned old mestizo* (*half breed*)]. I beg your pardon, sir. Our President is not of the Aztec race, but of the Zapotec.

Clark. And what is the difference?

City Dep. [*embarrassed because his awkward brain is forced to a definition*]. The Aztecs are very gentle. But the blood of the Zapotecs is different. [*He is silent, amazed at his own formulation.*]

Eliz. Yes, they are the most implacable of our Indians.

City Dep. I have a business friend in the south. He has a friend whose father was boss over Señor Juarez when he was a clerk in his store.

[*A bell shrill.* ELIZEA *rises quickly and goes off through the upholstered door to Juarez's room toward which all look with awe*

Clark [*to the* DEPUTY]. Ah! You know about the great man's boyhood.

City Dep. [*Wrests the story painfully from his own silence*]. He comes of poor cattle herders, our President. The shopkeeper gave him bread and work. Later he sent him to school. He went to the priests. He had a sharp mind. That is why they wanted to make a bishop of him.

Clark. What? Make a theologian of Juarez who confiscated the church property?

City Dep. He knows his devils backwards.

Clark [*Murmurs*]. And that's the man they won't let me interview?

City Dep. [*from the depths of torturing experience*]. Where he is, is deliverance.

A pause.

MARIANO ESCOBEDO, RIVA-PALACIO *and* PORFIRIO DIAZ, *the republican generals, enter through the President's door followed by* ELIZEA. *The Generals have not the bright fantastic uniforms of the officers in the imperial army of Mexico.* ESCOBEDO *and* PALACIO *wear simple long army coats of gray, gray trousers with red stripes, Wellington boots. Only* PORFIRIO DIAZ *wears the red Garibaldi shirt* (*which has become the symbol of republican revolution in Mexico*

as well), a belt and the national native sombrero. He is a scintillant little man with extremely concentrated features and a thin mustache —imperial. He must look much younger than RIVA-PALACIO *and somber, full-bearded* ESCOBEDO. *The Generals come front stage;* ELIZEA, *who entered with the Generals, motions to the* CITY DEPUTY *and leads him left, into the President's workroom. He returns immediately and withdraws into a window niche with the* REPORTER.

Riva-Palacio. Are you as worn out as I, gentlemen? The old man's mind's like a machine. My head aches.

Diaz. He doesn't affect me that way. To me he's like a woman one fears and adores.

Escobedo. We are all proud of you, General, and what's more: we're not jealous.

Diaz. We are more admired for inspiration which costs nothing than for the price of infinite pains. It's one of life's ironies—

Clark [*Approaches Generals*]. I have the high honor of addressing the greatest Generals of the republic— [*Generals glance at him forbiddingly.*] The United States and the White House look with friendship and brotherly love upon the heroic struggle of the Mexican people against foreign invasion and forcibly imposed monarchy. You gentlemen will allow me a few questions, I'm sure. New York is clamoring for news.

Esco. [*ironic*]. Riva-Palacio, you are the learned one among us. You answer him.

Riva-P. [*drily*]. Who dare talk when Porfirio Diaz is present?

Clark. Are you going back to your troops now?

Diaz. I can recite the roll-call of my troops from memory for you! One captain, two subalterns, one trumpeter, eight men.

Clark. For God's sake. This is a joke!

Diaz. I'm in bitter earnest. Tell the United States that we are not staging an interesting comedy; we are fighting for our lives.

Clark. But, gentlemen, this talk about the republican armies?

Riva-P. The enemy calls them rebels and bandits.

Clark. Not the army?

Esco. The last one was wiped out by the French at Oajaca.

Clark. They say Bazaine and Maximilian's strength is over-rated?

Diaz. Not at all. They command forty thousand French, Belgians, and Austrians, the best schooled officers in Europe, to drill our poor people into crack troops.

Clark. Things can't be that bad, General. You have the protection of the world's leading revolutionist, Garibaldi.

Diaz. Garibaldi, yes. But where is Garibaldi?

Clark [*magnanimously*]. Why the best men are fighting on your side, Excellency, the military geniuses, the true patriots, the—

Diaz. You are mistaken, our finest strategists, General Uraga and General Vidaurri, are Maximilian's bosom friends now. And the patriots are clawing at each other for Maximilian's order of Guadaloupe.

Clark. So the Archduke Maximilian is popular?

Diaz [*earnest, sincere*]. Grace and distinction always make an impression in Mexico.

Clark. They say he's quite a liberal.

Diaz. A European fairy tale with which every Prince embroiders his début.

Clark. Is it true, Mr. General, that Maximilian made advances to you?

Diaz. While I was a prisoner. First he invited me to an audience. When I didn't come he sent a carriage to bring me to a secret meeting. The third time he took the trouble to come to me. I refused him three times. But he honored me with his picture anyway. The President received one too. It was a very big one, with an inscription.

Clark. What did it say?

Eliz. "The wisdom of enmity is reconciliation" and "Maximilian" in big black letters underneath.

Clark. And Juarez?

Eliz. He studied the face for exactly two minutes; then he put it down and said, "The man mirrors himself."

Clark. Is the republican President fully aware of his difficult position?

Diaz. More aware of it than Maximilian.

CLARK *stares.*

Clark. What is he going to do?

Riva-P. Your question is impertinent! Luckily we cannot answer it. We Generals part tonight to go south, east and west—[*Shows him a sealed letter*]. Look at these sealed orders Juarez gave us. Each of us got one of these mysterious envelopes. [*Reads*]. "Not to be opened until designated post is reached."

Diaz. That envelope holds Mexico's future.

A few anxious figures crowd in at the big door.

Clark. Doesn't it frighten you, Mr. General, to be sent out like this into uncertainty and unknown danger?

Diaz. That's the glory of it, man. I like best to ride in thick morning mist, which might rise on anything!—Thought is for Juarez—deeds for the young. Because of his calmness there isn't any madness I wouldn't commit.

Clark. Youth—there's America for you.

City Dep. [*offstage*]. I knew it. [*Enters, deathly pale, by the left-hand door which stays ajar*]. I knew it—[*To the figures, who were waiting for him*]. We are lost. Tomorrow the President deserts us. He, the government, the —they're all going north to the border, and leave us to our ruin. The French are coming. They will revenge themselves, they kill children. Oh, oh! What's to become of us?

Wailing cries.

Diaz. Quiet, citizens!—You are safe—you are taken care of—Have no fear!—Long live the Republic. [*People outside take up the cry.*] [*Softly, to Generals.*] Gentlemen, let us show ourselves in the streets.

Esco. Good. Let us go.

Diaz. To the Plaza, citizens! Long live the Republic.

[GENERALS, DEPUTY *and* CITIZENS *off*

Cries. Long live the Republic! Long live Diaz!

Clark. So they're going back to the border? Things look pretty bad.

Eliz. You and I cannot judge as to that.

Clark. But—

Eliz. A good jumper takes a long start.

Clark. Yes, but where will we be tomorrow? Well, my chief will have to be patient. I'll do a character sketch of Juarez first.

Eliz. What?

Clark. I have the title already: "The Wizard of the Revolution." How's that?

Eliz. Pretty, but untrue, Señor Juarez is common sense itself. Look!

Clark [*Approaches curiously, glances through the door to* JUAREZ'S *room, and draws back, quickly frightened and humbled. Sheepish*]. Lord! He looked at me.

Eliz. He was not looking at you.

Clark. I'm no coward, but my heart's thumping like hell.

Eliz. He didn't see you. He's resting.

Clark. With those eyes staring?

Eliz. He's not asleep, nor awake, he's resting. As always after a great strain.

Clark. I think I'll do without that interview.

CURTAIN.

SECOND PICTURE

SCENE: *Off stage sounds indicating a party. Music, lights reflected. Fireworks.* MAXIMILIAN *in Mexican uniform. Terrace of the Imperial Pleasure Palace at Chapultepec. A starlit night. Background is clear sky for the terrace is on a shelf of the grasshopper cliff which once has been the fortress of the ancient Aztec emperor. Stone benches. In the middle of the stage a table with links (candles protected by globes). Before the curtain rises a pleasant tenor voice is heard singing a minor song to an obligato of habenera rhythm on the guitar. Maximilian's narrow face has the look of strained attention natural to a listener who does not understand men or their talk yet wants to be master of the situation continually. The blonde beard, parted down the middle, only veils the youthfulness of his features and the receding nature of his chin. The Emperor has a habit of running his hand through it as if to muss it. His body is very big in striking contrast to the small Mexican type.* MAXIMILIAN *suffers from the embarrassment of great height, from the peculiar shame of the well built in the presence of coarse and degenerate types. In moments of excitement he tries to burst the chains of royal manner. His jovial heartiness is not quite natural. In relaxed moods he has the automatically gracious manner of the old Austrian nobility. On this occasion he wears a formal swallow tail with one big order.* CAPTAIN MIGUEL LOPEZ *is an unbelievably elegant man in the late thirties. He wears the extremely ornate uniform of the imperialist officer. The gentle face with the reddish mustache, widely spaced little eyes and soft features is a roster of all the social virtues. The* CAPTAIN *turns an unchanging smile upon his companion which often stiffens his face into a nervous mask.* LOPEZ *is the singer. Slightly overheated, he wipes his forehead now, with his handkerchief. Two Indian musicians withdraw. The distant gaiety of a garden party murmurs through the quiet.*

Maximilian. Very lovely, my dear Lopez. What an excellent voice. You ought to have been an Italian. I'm an expert since my Milan regency. Brilliant!

Lopez. Your majesty is too kind. I'm a bit of a dilettant like every soldier. Half of military service is waiting. We must keep busy.

Max. [*affectionately*]. There is nothing I admire more in people than a gift for music. It's only the artist nature that can give us a real feeling of brotherhood—[*slightly taken aback by his own susceptibility*]. I should like to make you a permanent member of my court. . . .

Lop. Your Majesty overwhelms me with marks of his favor.

Max. I do not forget, Captain, that you were the first Mexican officer to serve the Empress and me. We came to know your chivalry when you rode beside our diligence on the precarious journey from Vera Cruz and your friends praise your bravery as an officer.

Lop. Sire, it was my privilege to fight for the Empire.

Max. I will keep you in mind for promotion to royal aide-de-camp or officer in the body-guards.

Embarrassed pause which precedes the end of an audience or a visit.

Lop. Your Majesty will forgive the liberty—[MAXIMILIAN *looks up.*] I am sure your Majesty has become familiar with the Mexican character—

Max. Thoroughly. And I know now that they misled me entirely in Europe. I have a predilection for that character. It's not absolutely simple, to be sure. But the author lied who wrote of the treason "which flows in Mexican veins."

Lop. Yes, Sire. He lies. Madonna! Is a man a traitor who has loved a woman; and all of a sudden she is old, commonplace? Sooner or later he must leave her, look for what is new and different. . . .

Max. My dear Lopez, are you painting your own portrait?

Lop. Oh, not only mine—Your subjects are fine people, Sire. They have blood and the courage of sacrifice but they have no memory—

Max. Which means?—

Lop. I am taking the liberty of warning your Majesty against us. In the long run, of course—the Emperor needs men of stability about him.

Max. [*his face shining*]. You are magnificent, my dear Lopez, magnificent. I know this self-distrust in all of you so well, this attempt to misrepresent yourselves. Guttierez, Hidalgo, you, none of you has the courage of your own personalities. I offered them places in the government, no one wanted to follow me—But that weakness is more sympathetic to me than the arrogant cocksureness of old Europe. You are your own enemies, yes, your own enemies. [*Paces back and forth emotionally, briskly.*] How could anything else be possible after the sad history of your country, — our country, — this, our fatherland? — Three centuries of Spanish exploitation, fifty years of the most horrible civil war—[*He stops before* LOPEZ.] I will help you—you must always remain near me, Captain. Wait for more detailed orders. *Reaches him his hand.*

Lop. [*Bows deeply over the Emperor's hand*]. Sire! I have warned you sincerely against myself.

Max. [*embarrassed, kind*]. Yes, that is your way. You confess the sins you might commit so you're prepared for anything. Your beautiful voice will please me often again. I thank you.

[LOPEZ *goes out*

Enter DR. SAMUEL BASCH, *the Emperor's personal physician. His age is indefinite, his face thin, short full beard and quiet manner. He obeys court convention with the negligent superiority of a spiritually independent person who guards his own integrity. The* EMPEROR *feels slightly constrained with him, hiding it beneath a great friendliness. Respect for the man, pleasure in having a European about him fight with an unconscious inherited antisemitism.*

Max. How kind of you to come to me again, Doctor. How do you find the Empress?

Basch. No diagnosis needed. I can reassure your Majesty with an easy conscience. The Empress is well.

Max. But these fits of melancholy, this over-excitement?

A band is heard playing a waltz offstage.

Basch. The result of over-work, too much intense activity and high tension. The battle against her growing nervousness must start now, your Majesty. It won't do for her Majesty to end her evenings at three o'clock in the morning with a visit of inspection to the hospital. Aside from the fact that surprises of the kind seem an evidence of mistrust to the people inspected — (which rankles particularly coming from their Empress),— Her Majesty is undermining her health.

Max. And the reason for this high tension—as you call it?

Basch. This thirst for incessant activity—if your Majesty will forgive me—is a frequent symptom with women who are childless, it's well known—

Max. [*changing the subject*]. Then it's not the climate? [*Absent-mindedly. Vaguely.*] This climate?

Basch. The climate of the Mexican plateau is a tonic for anyone.

Max. Yes, you're right my dear Basch. This continual springtime is lovely— [*with an almost sad gesture*]. Mango trees, azure skies, hummingbirds!—I still ache for the sea at times, but that's very seldom now. [GRILL, *his valet, comes in.*] What is it, Grill?

Grill [*announcing*]. Councillor Herzfield.

Max. [*excited*]. Ah Herzfield coming from the capital so late. Show him in at once. [GRILL *off.*] It must be very important. [*Uneasily gracious.*] Thank you, my dear Doctor. Goodbye, Goodbye. Thank you— [BASCH *withdraws.* STEFAN HERZFIELD *enters quickly. He is thirty-five, about two years older than the Emperor, and has the keen, open face of a sailor.* MAXIMILIAN *actually drops the narrowing distant attitude he so often shows others. He has affection for* HERZFIELD, *his boyhood friend. His love is returned with complete loyalty.* STEFAN HERZFIELD *wears a riding costume.*] Herzfield! Since you're back from Europe it seems as if a guardian angel were watching over everything.

What happiness to have you back so soon. [*Motions to a bench.*] Sit down! You must be tired. Do you want a cigar? You'll allow my usual peripatetics. Here! Sit down. Please make yourself comfortable.

Herzfield [*refusing*]. Thank you—

Max. What do you bring?

Herz. I bring your Majesty magnificent news. Benito Juarez has retired to the Rio Grande del Norte. They say he crossed the border into the United States.

Max. [*deeply moved, softly*]. God! This is too much! This is victory! [*Pressing his friend's hands.*] Herzfield! This is victory!

Herz. I didn't expect this turn of affairs.

Max. [*making a quick association*]. Yes, my dear Herzfield! God be praised, your pessimism has had a body blow. Juarez has run away. The so-called constitutional government has fallen. Ergo, the United States has no reason not to recognize me. Ergo, the conflict between Napoleon and the United States is over. France has a free hand and Bazaine no more excuses. The French will carry out their compact now. The logic of it's clear.

Herz. Quite clear if Juarez went over the border and not just *to* the border. We have only rumor to go by.

Max. How like you, Herzfield. And they say Austrians are frivolous. Melancholy pedants that's what you are, longing for a hair in your soup.

Herz. There's something about this "flight" I do not understand. Our general's attacks weren't exactly glorious. And Bazaine, the great strategist, doesn't give a damn about the army. He parades around the Residencia, gives diplomatic dinners, and plays providence to the Emperor. But why? Does anybody know why Juarez is retreating?

The music of the waltz ceases.

Max. I just had a great experience, when you brought me the news, Herzfield. I suddenly understood the mystery of Christian love for one's enemies. I loved Juarez.

Herz. He is a curious force.

Max. He and Porfirio Diaz. I'd give all the other Mexicans for those two men.

Herz. Nobody knows anything about him. There's not even a picture of him. His most impersonal personality disappears behind a few decrees. And yet one hears it roaring in the distance. Like a gigantic Niagara. The man is not of this century.

Max. [*uplifted*]. His day is over—why, why does he not come? He runs from me and I would clasp him in my arms. Why does he stay away? I could make his path to greatness.

Herz. Those are dreams. He must destroy the emperor.

Max. Why?

Herz. Only because he is emperor.

Max. Not true. Even Garibaldi yields to Victor Emanuel and I'm more liberal than he is.

Herz. Garibaldi is a sentimental European. But Juarez will not give up one atom of his rights.

Max. Rights?

Herz. The people elected him President.

Max. The plebiscite elected me later.

Herz. Your Majesty knows as well as I that clerical tricks and the brutality of French garrison commanders forced that plebiscite.

Max. I know now. But I didn't know it then. Herzfield, you are my good and my bad conscience.

Herz. [*almost against his will*]. Oh, I warned you as early as Miramar. What good can you build on misreckoning?

Max. Every stroke of genius is a lucky misreckoning. Every discovery, every deed, every victory in history — canonized by success — nothing but misreckoning.

Herz. God grant you're right.

Max. [*violently*]. But I see no mistake in reckoning here. You'll never shake off the inherent bitterness of the imperial officer. Friend, I realize my higher right and my mission. Rights and no rights are political words. Good must be imposed. Some day you'll understand me.

Mme. Barrio. Sire, Her Majesty.

[*The Empress' lady-in-waiting appears and immediately vanishes*

Max. Herzfield, you dear soul. You brought happy news—See me again in an hour. Have you dined? Grill will see to that. Goodbye, meanwhile. [HERZFIELD *off.* CARLOTTA *hurries in to* MAX. *She is a blooming woman of twenty-five. Her charm is only heightened by the sophistication which daily contact with politics lends a woman's face. She is in a crinoline evening dress. A big shawl, the native rehozzo, veils her décolleté. The wonderful dark hair is dressed in the Mailand fashion, parted in the middle with heavy hanging knots on either ear, and wears a big indented semicircular diadem.* CARLOTTA *talks with a jerky, irregular rhythm. She has an excitable, flitting manner as if she were always on the point of leaving.* MAXIMILIAN *kisses her hand.*] At last you've freed yourself from that odious celebration, Carlotta.

Carlotta. Yes, my duty was done when the fireworks commenced.

Max. You over-taxed yourself again.

Car. Every nobody here demands that familiar hand-shake. It isn't that, however, it's disgust. I've had an awful experience. Bazaine danced the habanera with his little señora. Like a huge lazy fly. The court laughed. But I didn't. I sensed his character. He's impossible in love. Why do men like him look so infernally evil when they're in love?

Max. He is a boor. What can you expect? The son of one of Bonaparte's petty officers.

Car. He suddenly made his adieus in the most embarrassed way— But darling—you're *tout émotionné?*

Max. You've not heard?

Car. Juarez?

Max. Yes, it's true, Carlotta. Now we are free at last to begin our work.

Car. Max, you must, you must accomplish it. How otherwise could I bear my guilt? In Miramar I defied everyone, death, and the devil and said: "Good, let us go."

Max. I once thought I married only the loveliest princess in Europe.

Car. [*quickly*]. Don't talk so. I am nothing. Nothing.

Max. But I married the best of Empresses.

Car. But no one likes me. It's not because I'm haughty, only worry for

you because I was bad and ambitious.

Max. Without you I never would have become what I am. You broke my chains with your splendid courage.

Car. I only knew whatever you touched became clear.

Max. You are the great moral influence of my life. You made me really know my family, young as you were. You taught me to understand my brother, Franz Joseph. I no longer hate him. [*With a wide gesture toward Austria.*] Wait a little while and you will see the miracle. What was I? A dilettant perpetrating bad verses. You waked the true creator in me. Yes, look at me. These are tears. Carla, I want with all the kindness in me to help the world. I thank you for the love that is in me.

Car. I? I poor, empty, barren thing? You imagine us so godlike. But we are merely human—petty and ambitious. People cannot help hurting you.

Max. No, people are fine. We must bring it out in them.

Car. I will work for you, Maximilian, since that's all that's left for me.

Music starts again off-stage.

Max. Carla. Enough of this nightmare. You look so wretched. Come, sit near me. This fear is nonsense. I am no dreamer. I stand entrenched and immovable. Juarez has fled. The republic is in the wrong. Our empire rests on more solid ground than France or Austria. Those other sovereign gentlemen are nothing but chiefs of police for the rich. I have new ideas of empire.

Car. You have them, not Napoleon.

Max. Birth, tradition, hereditary power are vital forces. They are the privileges life has given me. I can make men happy because I have no ambition for myself. Politics are only the end, the result of parvenu greed. I will destroy politics. I will free the Indians. I have already drafted my new manifesto. Juarez is an Indian. Won't he have to come? Won't my revolution force him to his knees? I foresee the day——

Car. [*Closes her eyes*]. Forgive me. I see nothing but the smug face of Labastida. I see that arch-politician Lares and the other mandarins. I see that plebeian Bazaine——

Max. Juarez is more than all of them and even he will have to yield.

Car. I see the blank face of destiny. It is bigger than Juarez!

Both rise.

Max. [*pointing into the night*]. My Carla. I see the ancient cypresses, the evergreens of Montezuma and Guatamoz. I see the stars over both volcanoes. I see this enchanted land on whose mountain plateau we lonely seafarers stand as on the deck of a dreaming, drifting ship. And I see something more I cannot recognize or name . . .

Car. I see you!

Max. I cannot hold back this new life, the youth which is rising in me to realize itself, and will long outlive us.

Car. Long outlive us . . . [*Kisses his hand.*]

Max. Carla!

Car. I have heard that you intend to make former Emperor Iturbide's little grandson, crown prince.

Max. [*painfully moved*]. That—is—not exactly the truth.

Courtesy of The Theatre Guild

"I will work for you, Maximilian, since that's all that's left for me."

Car. Do not think my nature is as little as that. You mustn't put off telling me things, or keep them from me. Since I know I can have no children, naming little Iturbide is a splendid plan. You must have a definite heir. It will bind the nation more closely to you. And—and if you want children of your own, my dear love, then send me away

CURTAIN.

THIRD PICTURE

SCENE: *The Imperial Palace in Mexico City. Council room of the council of state. Right two rows of raised tables for the members. Left the rostrum with the Emperor's table, as presiding officer. Center, an empty table covered with green. Big door rear. Left a little door papered to resemble the rest of the wall. The council has 25 members. The most conspicuous places are occupied by the Emperor's Ministers,* DON THEODOSIO LARES (*Councillor in chief*) *Chef des concils,* DON LACUNZA *and* LAWYER SILICEO, *the moderate liberal.* GENERAL TOMAS MEJIA, *the Indian, sits in the second row. Foreground somewhat apart (to one side) stands the Archbishop of Mexico,* MONSIGNORE PALAZIO LABASTIDA *in violet robes.* MAXIMILIAN *reads his speech, standing. He is surrounded by a small following,* HERZFIELD, DON LUIS JOSÉ, BLASIO *his private secretary,* CURATOR BIMILEK *of the museum. These gentlemen stand immediately behind the Emperor. Everybody is in frock coat and white gloves or dress uniform in complete regalia.*

Max. [*continuing his reading*]. Hence the ardent love we feel for our country did not spring up when we assumed our heavy duties but was implanted early in our heart by God's providence. [*Pause.*] Hernan Cortez, a general under our worthy ancestor Emperor Charles the Fifth, was forced by cruel circumstances to assume a heavy load of guilt toward the noble inhabitants of this land. It was always our dream to atone for the guilt of his barbarity. Unfortunately the ships' arrival was delayed and it is only now that we are able to lay the weapons and insignia of the noble Emperor Montezuma in your hands. Our heart is pursuing a favorite idea. The aboriginal race which once was mistress of this land still mothers the great mass of the people as in olden times. She was cast from the high plane of culture to which the ruins about us attest into misery and decay. Must not our hearts bleed when we admire the high gifts of those Indians who worked themselves above the bleak conditions of their race? High Assembly of Mexico's most important men, in spite of the many political problems surging in upon us I beg that you will lay the great pregnant question of our state to your hearts—the Indian question. We entreat your suggestions upon the following points: First: The formation of an Indian assembly. Second: The solution of the educational problem——. Has Your Eminence any suggestions?

He folds the paper together.

Archbishop Labastida [*a coarse-featured, yet fine head such as is sometimes found among middle-class Italian*

churchmen. A stubborn fanatical man]. Who does not know the lofty heart of the Emperor which is again visible in this costly gift to his museum?

Herz. [*softly, behind* MAXIMILIAN]. Scoundrel.

Archbishop Lab. His Majesty has its Indian problems among other problems but the Indian problem is a question of schools. Where shall we find teachers? Not only a Catholic prince, even a heretic would have to answer "from the monasteries, the lay clergy, since there are no seminaries outside the church. But his Catholic Majesty himself confirmed the so-called Reform Law of the Archtraitor Juarez, confiscating church land, abolishing the monasteries, and beggaring the clergy. The starving priest stands apart, weeping. What help could he give?

Max. Your Eminence paints a most pathetic picture. I know of no country where superstition and ignorance are allowed to flourish more than in Mexico.

Archbishop Lab. It is a property of the elastic nature of our wonderful religion that eternal truths of salvation adapt themselves to the mind in which they are mirrored. Catholicism is not theology but life.

Max. I am a good Catholic, Monsignore! But I might have foreseen that you would bitterly oppose my plans.

Archbishop Lab. My person which reveres Your Majesty deeply is not the question. But it was the church party, sire, which offered you the throne.

Max. Is it your intention to reproach me with that?

Archbishop Lab. The church feels deserted and confused. Your Majesty's first official act was a recognition of that defiler of Churches, Juarez.

Max. I am not the head of a party, I am Emperor.

Archbishop Lab. The throne stands or falls with the altar, the world over.

Max. Is that your opinion also, Minister Lares?

Theodosio Lares [*A nervously smooth compromiser, takes the floor*]. In the name of the government and the nation I thank Your Majesty for the historical treasures you have given us. Now as to the other problems, I move that we elect a committee to work out appropriate suggestions.

Herz. [*softly*]. Committee! Ah, you clever gravedigger.

Lares. At the present moment a law concerning the Indians would not be expedient. Humanity? Yes, but later.

Lawyer Siliceo [*a timid scholar*]. As a moderate liberal I salute the worthy idea of His Majesty on the one hand but upon the other I cannot agree with my honored predecessor. I agree to the plan of a preparatory committee—for upon the one hand —[*Laughter.*] Upon the other hand—

Archbishop Lab. Let "upon the one hand—upon the other hand" be your speech. Sit down, lawyer.

General Tomas Mejia [*A dull, kindly Aztec in his forties, steps forward*]. My Commander-in-Chief: I, Your Majesty's General, am an Indian. That is the sorrow of my life. Longingly, I gaze toward higher men—white-skinned men. My brothers are ugly

and low. I despise them. There is no hope for them but to die out.

Max. General! Is that the opinion of your brother Juarez?

Mejia. The Emperor will capture and kill Juarez.

Max. Would it not be better to convince him and make a friend of him?

Voices. The democratic revolution must be stifled in its own blood.

Other Voices. That's why we got the French and an Emperor. Protect us from the cruelty of Juarez. He is our country's foe.

Max. You cannot kill opposites, only reconcile them——

Voices. Juarez is a traitor. Death to Juarez! There can be no peace with him. Never! Never! Death to him!

Laughter and sulky exclamations on all sides.

Max. Gentlemen, your fanaticism has achieved nothing but fifty years of civil war. I have a hard head, and I will end it. Juarez apparently has given up his cause for lost. I beg you to help me. Away with hate.

Sudden sound of long rolling bombardment.

Mejia. Cannons! [*Great commotion.*]

Lares. What does that mean?

Mejia. Not ten leagues away

Sil. The President's answer.

Archbishop Lab. The Marshal!

FRANÇOIS ACHILLE BAZAINE, *Marshal of France, has entered the empty space center. He wears a service uniform, riding boots and whip.* BAZAINE *is a much coarsened likeness of Napoleon the Third. The famous moustache and imperial are badly dyed. He bows low to* MAXIMILIAN.

Bazaine. Sire! I beg you to forgive my lack of punctuality. Urgent business kept me——

Max. I do not presume to criticise the behavior of the Marshal of France. Is Your Excellency able to enlighten this high assemblage as to the meaning of this singular cannonade?

Baz. Our brave troops are about to capture a strong band of Juarist guerillas. Nothing more.

Cannons are heard again.

Max. A few days ago, Marshal, you assured me that the enemy had been driven from all its positions. And today you must attack his guerilla bands, as you call them, within earshot of our palace?

Baz. [*superciliously*]. I am willing to talk over anything that has occurred with your Majesty, but not at this time.

Max. I understand. High Assembly, this session of the council of state is adjourned.

[*Exits quickly with his entourage through the small concealed door. Only* HERZFIELD *remains on the rostrum glaring into the room. The notables have left their places and are moving about in excited groups*

Archbishop Lab. [*Approaches the* MARSHAL]. Is it true, Marshal? Do you contemplate selling your palace in the city?

Baz. Who said that? What nonsense.

Lab. Why shouldn't you get tired of the whole business after a while?

Baz. It doesn't depend on me.

Lab. Of course you know this is only envy, Marshal Bazaine, but I

admire that elegant house of yours, Buena Vista. In case anything happens think of me.

HERZ. [*threatening the noisy roomful*]. Dogs!

CURTAIN.

FOURTH PICTURE

In the Imperial Palace, Mexico City. An audience chamber. High mirrors. In the rear and right two big doors. Left a portièred entrance. Furnished in Second Empire taste with Mexican motifs. MAXIMILIAN, BAZAINE, *and* EDOUARD PIERRON, *Captain of the Zouaves.*

Baz. This is Pierron, Sire. My young friend will help us come to an understanding. Pierron isn't a common everyday trooper like me. My bluntness will not annoy you in him. He is a philosopher.

Max. Emperor Napoleon recommended you warmly to me, Captain.

Pierron [*a very ugly staff officer who typifies the very cultured and morbidly intelligent officer to be found in every army. Soldiers bow to the "thinker" in shuddering awe. He is a good fellow as long as he is not in the clutches of his passion for dialectics*]. Your Majesty! I respectfully beg to announce that I have entered your service.

Max. Thank you. [*Gives him his hand.*] Gentlemen, I cannot hide my anxiety from you. Napoleon's glorious troops won battle after battle under your leadership, Marshal. Juarez was compelled to retreat to the border, perhaps beyond it. Everything appeared to be settled—And then, suddenly, the rebel government begins this guerilla warfare with unexpected energy and bravery.

Baz. I have worked out a counter-offensive.

Max. [*pointedly*]. That I cannot doubt, Marshal Bazaine. Not only my success, but your reputation and that of France's, too, are in the balance.

Baz. [*broadly*]. Naturally my counter-offensive must be supported.

Max. You can hardly complain on that score. I continually sacrifice my own and my country's interest to France. I had to reduce my personal expenses to a fifth. The Marshal is good at fighting but poor at saving.

Baz. Money's not the big question this time.

Max. Your enterprise is in its third year. The opposition in Paris laugh at you. All victories and no results. And then you send home an entire brigade.

Baz. [*bluntly*]. Neither Your Majesty nor I has the right to question my Emperor's orders.

Max. [*ignoring the impudence*]. I cannot understand the Emperor. And I do not understand you, Bazaine.

Baz. Sire, you may rely freely on my experience.

Max. We have the same end in view.

Baz. Ah, yes, Sire, but very different parts to play. Your Majesty prefers beaming kindness and I have to be a watch-dog.

Max. You are a military man. A sovereign's virtue is kindness.

Baz. Not always, Sire.

Max. [*Turns sharply*]. Why, Marshal Bazaine, do you put every obstacle in the way of my forming a national army?

Baz. Napoleon told me to disarm this country. I cannot allow untrustworthy Mexican filibusters who call themselves "general" to gather armed mobs. These generals do enough harm already with the men they have.

Max. Marshal, you are more greedy for power than anyone I know.

Baz. The basic reason for my action is concern for Your Majesty. That will be evident some day. Pierron, what did we do tonight?

Pier. Weighed all the possibilities of securing Your Majesty's throne permanently.

Baz. And our decision?

Pier. Can be expressed in one word —Energy.

Max. Explain more fully, Captain.

Pier. Your Majesty alone has allowed himself an attitude of mildness concerning Juarez and the revolution. The election did give the man some semblance of legitimacy. But now he has deserted his country.

Baz. Pierron, you brought the decree?

PIERRON *draws a sheet from his briefcase.*

Max. I veto the decree——

Baz. Sire, you do not know what is in it. It's a decree——

Max. No, but I [*looking at them*] sense it.

Baz. Pierron! Outline the main clause——

Pier. Any foe of the present government found bearing arms is to be taken to the nearest troop commander and be put to a shameful death.

Max. [*quietly*]. Marshal Bazaine! Men of my rank are the benefactors or martyrs of their people, not their murderers.

Baz. You can talk like that, as long as I do the murdering.

Pier. I have been studying the history of Napoleon the First in a search for analogies. The Titan advises his brother Joseph to have all malcontents and guerillas hanged as they are caught. If King Joseph had followed that advice Spain would never have been lost.

Baz. [*all pride in his officer's intelligence*]. Ah, that's it, Pierron.

Max. Haven't I yet made myself clear? I am no Cæsar, no dictator. I do not want to make myself supreme. I come of an ancient race whose hunger has long since been satiated. The rightful ruler is the incarnation of God's love for the world. He must have good will to men.

Baz. Good will, sire, is usually bad politics.

Pier. And how does Your Majesty contemplate establishing himself?

Max. [*violently*]. By murder? By murder? I kill men because they have opinions?

Pier. There are two possibilities for Your Majesty: To assert yourself or——[MAXIMILIAN *rises, rigid*]. The goal must be reached. Action is the only morality in such a case. Each weakness is doubly cruel because it postpones consolidation and increases bloodshed.

Max. [*Suddenly bursts forth*]. I have been betrayed.

Pier. Not the man but the situation dictates.

Baz. [*noisily*]. That's logic for you, Sire.

Pier. [*carried away by his own dialectic*]. Properly viewed this decree is an act of philanthropy. Give them three or four lessons. Rumor will multiply them by a hundred. In three months we have peace.

Baz. [*foolishly*]. I'll guarantee that.

Pier. Sire, would Juarez hesitate for a moment if he were you?

Max. He is himself. [*Softly.*] God, mayn't I stay clean?

Baz. Our troops are worn down. This guerilla warfare is more depressing than any. We bear everything. For whom? For Your Majesty, who refuses to stand with us. This can't go on. You must support me. I have strict orders from Paris. You are bound to sign this law by your agreement with my master the Emperor.

Max. [*sharply*]. I am bound by nothing but my conscience. I will forgive Your Excellency's bad manners. Not another word of this.

PIERRON *lays decree on a table.*

Maximilian's attitude demands they leave. BAZAINE *lets the mask of military gruffness fall. His eyes become Asiatic slits in his passionate craftiness. He approaches the Emperor suggestively.* MAXIMILIAN *retreats with a light gesture of rebuff to preserve the distance he feels necessary to him.*

Baz. I understand, Sire. You want time to consider my ultimatum. Pray do.

[*The two Frenchmen exit.* HERZFIELD *is ushered in through the middle door by* SECRETARY BLASIO. MAXIMILIAN *grasps him and gives him the paper*

Max. There—read that. Read it.

Herz. Any foe of the present government found bearing arms is to be taken to the nearest troop commander and be put to a shameful death.

Max. What's going to happen, Herzfield?

Herz. Any weapon in a tight place.

Max. [*tensely*]. No, I must be strong.

CARLOTTA *enters suddenly by the curtained doorway. She has three-year-old* AUGUSTIN ITURBIDE *in her arms. She goes to* MAX, *in rigid gravity*

Car. I bring your crown prince, Maximilian.

Max. [*Takes the struggling child from his wife's arms, in deep embarrassment*]. You? You bring me this child? [*Puts child on floor.*] Carlotta ——[*Takes the boy's hand.*] You belong to us now. If you could only foretell your future.

Don Blasio [*Enters quickly, excited*]. Your Majesty, I found this big envelope in your room. No one knows who delivered it.

Max. [*Waits till* BLASIO *exits, then glances over the envelope*]. "To Maximilian Hapsburg. From the Republican President's Headquarters." "Paso del Norte." Juarez! Good God! At last! [*In jerky prayer. Tears open the envelope.*] My picture! The Wisdom of Enmity is Reconciliation. He has sent the picture back. This is how he answers me—What a fool I was— [*Pause.*] This is too much. [*After five tense seconds he throws away the picture and seizes the decree.*] This is too much.

Car. [*very calm*]. Come, Herzfield, the Emperor wants to be alone.

[*They all go*

Courtesy of The Theatre Guild

Maximilian, Carlotta and the little Iturbide

Max. [*with the blank expression of a man in unbearable agony*]. This is too much. [*In a fit of anger he sits and signs the decree.*]

CURTAIN.

END OF THE FIRST PHASE

SECOND PHASE

Fifth Picture

Scene: *In the Imperial Palace in Mexico City. A corridor.* Bazaine *and* Pierron.

Baz. Pierron, I cannot help myself.

Pier. Sh—not so loud.

Baz. Don't worry, Pierron. They can't afford spies.

Pier. I've never had such a feeling of uneasiness before.

Baz. That's because you're young.

Pier. After all, the decree was my idea. I feel responsible.

Baz. The idea was good.

Pier. Good for a Bonaparte, not for Maximilian. A man's character shouldn't be twisted——

Baz. Suppose he hasn't any?

Pier. Maximilian cannot stand the hate that makes a glowing torch of real genius. Natures like his cannot live except in an atmosphere of kindness. We are to blame.

Baz. I can't see that.

Pier. What is the result? A lot of gold-braided hyenas—the Mexican generals, I mean—have satisfied their lust for vengeance. But the decree we made him sign last year was planned as a tool to force peace, like the idea of the rapid attacks toward the border. And what has happened? Nothing!

Baz. Our master's orders. Democratic North America threatens him. Juarez manoeuvres well.

Pier. Europe ought to engage him as a teacher of statesmen.

Baz. It's too late now. Two years ago I could have settled things before that self-opinionated Archduke rode up on his high horse to annoy me. But he put three idiots in command ahead of me. Dirty mess! What can he expect?

Pier. Do we have to tell that poor soul that France has to abandon the undertaking? I'm so sorry for him.

Baz. France has made nothing out of this. The man will never grasp what it's all about. Well—I'm sorry for him too.

Pier. Your Excellency, I beg your pardon most humbly, but that is not the exact truth.

Baz. Eh? You think pretty clearly, Pierron, for a philosopher.

Pier. Marshal, as a soldier you are pitiless but at heart you are really a kind man.

Baz. Ah, yes, but the world doesn't understand me.

Pier. Some day it will.

Baz. [*moved*]. You think so? I'm really a good soul; I often pity myself for it.

Pier. Your trouble is not Maximilian's nobility but your abject admiration for Napoleon.

Baz. I'd be crucified for him. He has a way with me—a something——

Pier. Let us call it—winning embarrassment.

Baz. That's just it, Pierron. But this Maximilian comes down freshly scrubbed from Heaven. He lives up on the heights; and look at me! His sweetness enrages me.

Pier. [*very grave*]. Excellency, forget your irritation today and remember he is an unfortunate man.

Baz. I won't gloat over his débâcle but some day he'll appreciate my kindness.

HERZFIELD *and* DON BLASIO *enter.* HERZFIELD *bows stiffly*

Blasio. His Majesty is at liberty to see you.

[BAZAINE *and* PIERRON *off behind* BLASIO. DR. BASCH *enters quickly from the other side*

Herz. Well, Doctor. Read the papers?

Basch. These executions are criminal insanity. Can you understand it? La "Monarquia," the royalist paper, abusing the Emperor?

Herz. He wanted to stand above parties but he fell between them. The poor Emperor. The conservative generals have the decree. Bloody revenge is free. I could strangle myself for not having seen through the French intrigue.

Basch. Intrigue?

Herz. Bazaine had to compromise the Emperor in some way to justify his defeat. Therefore the decree. He made him a target for universal hatred. Now everything, everything, is blamed on the Emperor. The guilt began with the acceptance of the throne on a false premise.

Basch. There's one certainty—he is guilty of the decree.

Herz. And I allowed that decree. Hideous. The traitors are busy. Labastida is making an "episcopal progress" into Juarist territory.

Basch. What frightens me more is that giant mass-meeting in New York. Thirty thousand Yankees declaring themselves for Juarez!

Herz. Where is the Medusa who seems to be gazing at us with her immortal snake-eyes?

Basch. In some village; at the border; in Napoleon's nightmare; in Garibaldi's friendship; in the Vienna papers. God knows where else!

Herz. The Emperor looks pitifully bad.

Basch. Like a man who has committed a crime in his sleep.

Herz. Dr. Basch, let's be frank with each other. What must come, must.

Basch. The sooner the better.

Herz. We are Maximilian's only friends.

Basch. We conscious dreamers must help the unconscious dreamer. *They shake hands.* COLONEL LOPEZ *appears in the doorway*

Herz. [*softly, to* BASCH]. We must get him to safety.

Basch. I see only one way.

Herz. Doctor, you are older than I, but I offer you my friendship.

Basch. So be it, my dear friend.

Lop. [*Approaches, very assiduous*]. Gentlemen, I do not know what happened, but the Marshal's interview was extremely short. Their Majesties are very nervous today.

Don Blasio [*Enters*]. Gentlemen, permit me. Their Majesties are coming.

Herz. [*to* BASCH]. Come along, Basch!

Lop. What were you saying, gentlemen? Ah, you cannot imagine yourselves into the poor unquiet soul of Mexico.

[*All off.* MAXIMILIAN *and* CARLOTTA *enter. The Emperor looks very bad, the Empress is in deep mourning for her father, Leopold of Belgium. She gives the impression of a dark, flickering flame. Her fingers are rigidly clutched around a black fan*

Car. You will come with me?

Max. [*Closes the doors*]. Stay here. I don't want to be alone. I don't feel at all well. It's cold here.

Car. And I feel hot. Hellishly hot. It was hell, too. For what is hell but a blind alley with no way out?

Max. They have unmasked themselves.

Car. Ah, Bazaine! Bazaine is only an echo. But behind him I see him the father of lies. I recognize him. Juarez is only your enemy, but he is your opposing principle. *He* wants to do away with cleanness so people will adore him.

Max. Napoleon!

Car. He raised you only to let you fall.

Max. Carlotta, it is human perversion to make everybody responsible except oneself.

Car. What can we do? He floats above us! [*Pause.*] Let us burn incense.

Max. Napoleon is like Bazaine and all of them, a greedy coward and egoist.

Car. Max!

Max. I am not a fit tool for his dirty business. Juarez influences the United States, it raises its arm. Napoleon bows low and notifies me he is about to withdraw his support. My charming brother acts no differently and orders back the ship with the new volunteers.

Car. Max! Suppose you free yourself from them, from Europe!

Max. Oh, if I were only still myself. In three months I'd have a national army. But feel my hands——

Car. Cold—so cold.

She draws him to an armchair and remains standing behind him.

Max. Since the horror occurred——

Car. [*in the grasp of her fixed idea*]. There, you've—He breathed it into you through Bazaine and Pierron.

Max. [*jerkily, tense.*] I — I — I signed the decree. [*Pause.*] I floated to this land on heavenly wings, it seemed. And then I—I—I give the signal for hideous massacre. [*Pause.*] Did it come from me? From me? I'm so tired ever since. I am not living any more——

Car. Max, this remorse is only self-pity. Everyone kills. God kills. We must stand firm. It is your imperial right.

Max. [*tortured*]. No. I, I of all men had no right to do it. [*Very softly.*] Carla, I am broken. Let's give up.

Car. [*starting*]. And let him win?

Max. I betrayed my ideal. God's mouth spews me forth. . . .

Car. I'm a woman, and I love you, the human being.

Max. Nothing can save me now.

Car. When you talk like that you vanish from me, you become petty and low. What? Throw away sovereignty, the golden air of the mountaintops? Do you want to go on living when they no longer call us "majesty"? I don't. Can the sunlight abdicate?

Max. It can grow dark.

Car. Go then, and be your brother's underling again.

Max. [*Jumps up*]. No!

Car. Max, Max! Look at me. I will save you.

Max. You?

Car. Yes, I. We need France, we need Europe. Good! Who presents our case there? Medal chasers and intriguers.

Max. That is true.

Car. I will go to Europe for you. I! On the very next ship.

Max. What are you saying?

Car. [*in rising ecstasy*]. I, The Empress, with my retinue! I will carry your light in my hand. I will seek Napoleon, that arch-devil, in his hell. Me he shall not withstand. My poor father is dead now. But my brother rules in Brussels. I'll return with an army corps. I'll force my way into the Vatican. I'll bring you the concordat in spite of Labastida. I'll stand before each door as a barefoot beggar and as thundering justice. For you! I'll scream the truth into your brother's face. Hapsburg power is dying in him and in old decaying nations. In you and in America the Hapsburgs are reborn. And, hardest of all, I'll go to your bad, pious mother who hates me and say: Look, woman, that is your son.

Max. Charlotte, you?

Car. [*deeply*]. You, my light, I will atone in that way, just as I love that strange child for your sake.

Max. I can't let you go, the only person I have, and the strongest. I can't sacrifice you!

Car. Max! Don't forbid me.

Max. This journey is impossible without a suite. We have so little money.

Car. I have planned for that, I'll take the charity funds they have subscribed.

Max. But Charlotte! That—that's a crime.

Car. Crime! How like a man. A crime to wring the arch-fiend's neck so that you may triumph?

CURTAIN.

Sixth Picture

Scene: *Headquarters of the Republican eastern army at Tlapa. A bare room with an open balcony door rear. A field bed, a table with papers, a chair. Outside on the invisible street great commotion; sounds of marching, music, cheers.* Generals Diaz *and* Palacio.

Riva-P. Is it true, Porfirio, that you have never been sick?

Diaz. It's not as bad as that. I've had the measles. But wounds really don't affect me much. I've seldom fallen because of a bullet in me. Pah! There I go again, boasting of my coarse, fleshly nature.

Riva-P. Porfirio Diaz is never sick and Benito Juarez has never dreamed.

Diaz. Yes, that's so.

Riva-P. Historians will have to admit that Juarez was dreamless reason and Diaz the enchanted youth of Mexico.

Diaz. I don't know why you keep insisting that I'm young. I'm two years older than Maximilian.

Riva-P. The people see not the facts of a man, but his secret. Your secret is you'll be twenty when you're seventy.

Diaz. God knows I'd die of melancholy if I could no longer climb trees.

Riva-P. I still remember that day at Chihuahua! You presented eight men to the President as his eastern army. That's not a year ago. Now you have twenty thousand armed men. Your magic lies in not being military. The lads run after you like the hero of a boy's book.

Diaz. That's true. I could put an army corps of school boys into the field. Oh—that Maximilian, starting an adventure with ideas instead of joy in the adventure.

Riva-P. That's how he masks his vanity. He lets the money gang lure him into the country, develops social redeemer programs, and keeps the hangmen busy.

Diaz. An hour comes to every idealist when he can or does become a murderer.—And yet—I envy him.

During this speech he goes several times to the balcony door and looks out secretly.

Riva-P. Envy him?

Diaz. Can you imagine the joy of having a man like Juarez for your enemy? I sometimes wish myself in Maximilian's place. He doesn't realize his boldness. Anyway! I respect it.

Riva-P. The French are deserting him.

Diaz. I'd have chased that filth out long ago and made them come to terms with us on a fair and square basis—without bloodshed.

Cries [*outside*]. Long live Porfirio Diaz!

Diaz. That crowd out there's an iron you have to strike while it's hot. We have enough men. But as far as weapons, munitions and money go, it looks bad. I pay my soldiers only ten centavos. The officers support themselves. As things stand a defeat might wipe us out. But you know me. I don't like things too easy. [*Looks out.*] Ha—at last!

Noise outside.

Diaz. You have to give him credit.

Riva-P. What? Labastida?—He dares come into enemy territory? You show him mercy enough in not throwing him in prison.

Diaz. I have a weakness for all forms of courage, even impudence. Monsignor is making a journey among the Indians to confirm them. He wouldn't be averse to my making him a popular martyr whom I'd have to set free in two days. . . .

Riva-P. [*at the balcony*]. They're not hissing any longer. Many of them are kneeling and he is blessing the crowd. That's what the revolution against the Church is worth.

Diaz. Yes, that's what it's worth, if you're an ass and have no understanding of life.

Riva-P. Your eyes are blazing, Porfirio.

Diaz. I'm an incurable bully.

[Riva-Palacio *goes.* Archbishop Labastida *enters between two chaplains. He wears a black soutane*

Archbishop Lab. Leave me alone now, friends, with this young hero. [*After a long pause, with studied civility.*] You will offer me a chair, General.

Diaz [*equally polite*]. As you see, Monsignor, my republican parlor is quite primitive. My visitors usually sit on the bed. May I beg you?

Archbishop Lab. [*sitting down majestically*]. I am not badly spoiled, my dear Porfirio Diaz. My duty as a shepherd commanded me to make this arduous journey into my war-stricken dioceses. I have lived through some fairly bad brawls.

Diaz. And escaped even worse dangers, Citizen Archbishop Pelagio de Labastida.

Archbishop Lab. The priest, like the soldier, may not know the

meaning of fear. You will pardon the comparison.

Diaz. I'll expand it. What would have happened to me if I had shown myself at headquarters in the imperial capital of Mexico?

Archbishop Lab. You would have been shot down, General.

Diaz. Wrong, dear sir, I'd have been strung up for spying.

Archbishop Lab. [*with imperturbable calm*]. In either case that would have been a great misfortune for Mexico.

Diaz. I will give you the benefit then, Citizen Archbishop, of assuming that yours is a—shall I say—rather limping comparison.

Archbishop Lab. The institution I represent is not touched by the war. I made this journey with full knowledge of its danger. The Church is neutral.

Diaz. What an amazing pronunciamento. Aren't you the Archbishop Pelagio de Labastida who was leader of the royalist agitation two years ago?

Archbishop Lab. [*parrying skillfully*]. I never attempted to avoid the designs of Providence.

Diaz. Yes, Providence evidently needs accomplices. Who was it called in a paper Emperor from across the ocean to oppose the rightful government?

Archbishop Lab. I will gladly concede that Maximilian is, as they say in the theatre, badly cast.

Diaz. And if he were not?

Archbishop Lab. I would certainly not have the honor of this conversation with you, General.

Diaz [*with quiet wit*]. I've always said it. Not monarchy, but monarchists, make kings impossible . . . And when Maximilian made the incomprehensible mistake of confirming Juarez's Church Law he acknowledged Juarez's greatness . . . And of course your income was cut down considerably.

Archbishop Lab. [*very gravely*]. With that small income, my young warrior, we do immeasurable good. Do you gentlemen really think you can influence the hearts of a simple people with democratic editorials? Just now I was able by the infinite wisdom of the papal dispensation to give this free-thinking crowd the apostolic blessing. It was a fine moment when the religious heartbeat burst through the thin crust of your republican propaganda. Ah, your poor, poor people. You cannot feed nor clothe them. They are all too often the picture of misery.

Diaz. Nevertheless they know how to win.

Archbishop Lab. I compliment you deeply upon that, my brave Diaz. But the French have not yet sailed away and Maximilian's army grows every hour.

Diaz. Is that the only news you bring?

Archbishop Lab. It is my privilege as the unbiased representative of the Church—to inform you that the Church does not care which form of government emerges victorious.

Diaz. And the conditions of this neutrality?

Archbishop Lab. Ah — you still play politics like a boy, my friend. [*As if improvising carelessly.*] Well, the republican government and the church might give each other mutual guarantees of immunity.

Diaz. And Maximilian?

Archbishop Lab. We will reach some agreement with you as to the Emperor's person.

Diaz. Which means?

Archbishop Lab. Greater clarity would be superfluous at the moment.

Diaz. Do you speak as head of the Imperialist Party?

Archbishop Lab. I am the Archbishop of Mexico.

Diaz. Very well, Archbishop of Mexico. You offer Maximilian's person and cause. I have two answers to give you. First: We despise and reject your offer. We will never soil our triumph. I wouldn't conduct any war that was not a moral crusade. That is the only excuse on earth for violence. I am not fighting Maximilian, who is a martyr to his birth and your rascality. I am fighting the whole tribe of grafters and jingoists, slave-drivers and ghouls, who have raised his throne as a screen for their crimes. I'll wreck and uproot every last one of them. I'll have no mercy for them. And the second answer, Citizen Archbishop, Pelagio de Labastida, would be a pair of handcuffs.

Archbishop Lab. [*with smiling comprehension of his attitude*]. Beautifully declaimed, Citizen Diaz. You are still more of a bull than a bullfighter. I beg you to pronounce my arrest quietly.

Diaz. On the contrary, Monsignor. [*Beats three times on the table*, AIDE DE CAMP *enters.*] The Archbishop's coach. Escort of twenty cavalry. I hold you responsible for getting his party to enemy territory unmolested within twenty-four hours.

CURTAIN.

SEVENTH PICTURE

SCENE: *In the Emperor's Palace at Orizaba. Workroom. Two high windows left. Doors right and rear. Center a long table with books, atlases, a microscope.* MAXIMILIAN *and* DR. BASCH *enter.* MAXIMILIAN, *in travelling clothes,* DR. BASCH *with a big specimen-box which he lays on the table.*

Max. [*Takes the specimen-box, goes to the open window and opens it. Great tired moths whirl about him and then fly away*]. The moths have flown away—like strange souls. One of them just brushed my face. Why are we afraid of other lives? Horror leaps from all other life, from every life.—Are you angry that I set them free?

Basch. No. They're not mine. Curator Bimilek has been collecting them for his museum. Let others follow moths. I am chasing an idea which gave me no peace even when I was in college.

Max. May I know what it is?

Basch. A mirage. Your Majesty! I am looking for a medicine to calm the death-struggle and relieve the mortal pain without deadening the senses.

Max. What a blasphemous idea! You daren't ease the pains of birth or you will injure life. It is the same thing! How often I realize now that death is a life germinating within us: the fruit of our bodies, the fruit of our souls. You must cherish it deep inside you. Ah, my poor wife. Is Dr. Riedel a good neurologist?

Basch. He's the most advanced man we have in Austria.

Max. Do *you* consider the Empress' illness incurable?

Basch. Certainly not, Your Majesty.

Max. Delusions of persecution? I tell you, Carlotta's letters are highly sensible. They have a shattering logic which makes our normal reasoning seem futile.

Basch. I insist that the sight of Your Majesty at Miramar would cure the Empress on the instant. Her sickness is nothing but nervous exhaustion. Her Majesty lived through weeks and months of unspeakable tension. Napoleon's refusal. Her brother's denial of an audience, their coldness in Vienna, the Pope's inexorable attitude

Max. Don't! All that for me! I martyred a saint. I allowed that hideous journey. What is my sin against life that turns everything I touch to horror?

Basch. Miramar and the sea will help.

Max. That tremendous yearning for the sea. My poor Carlotta.

Basch. The evil spell will break as you see the shores of Vera Cruz disappear. Everything will be all right.

Max. The only thing that quiets me is the repeal of last year's terrible decree.

Basch. It was a fine last chapter, Your Majesty.

Max. [*Starts up nervously*]. Last? No, that is not in my hands. Down there in the City Hall the Council of State is considering my abdication. [*Looks at the clock.*] My personal happiness must yield to higher considerations.

Basch. Why didn't Your Majesty appear personally before the Assembly?

Max. [*quite bewildered*]. I can't, my dear Basch. I can't endure people. [HERZFIELD *enters.*] You are free, Doctor. I'll leave you to your witches' brew for today.

Basch. [*as he goes, softly, to* HERZFIELD.] Pull yourself together.

Herz. The deputation is on the way. I beg Your Majesty to consider your own good.

Max. I must think of Mexico's good.

Herz. Mexico must help herself.

Max. I am her Emperor.

Herz. To me you are an Austrian Archduke.

Max. [*horrified*]. Are you preaching dishonor, Herzfield?

Herz. No, deliverance. The *Dandolo* lies under steam in Vera Cruz harbor.

Max. I am not a prisoner trying to escape.

Herz. It will soon be too late for escape. Juarez is pressing forward everywhere and the French troops are marching to the harbors.

Max. I have laid my fate in the hands of the Council.

Herz. I pray to God they will accept your abdication.

Max. Is that your feeling, Herzfield? I could not understand nor bear their acceptance.

Herz. My prayer will stay unanswered. Those stinking nobles use you for a shield. They have nothing to expect but vengeance. Sire! Let us leave here today. It's the only reward I'll ever ask for my friendship.

Max. Herzfield, you never understood me.

A confusion of voices outside.

Herz. They're here.

The deputation appears. It consists of Ministers THEODOSIO LARES, LACUNZA *and* LICENTIATE SILICEO. *They solemnly take their places before the* EMPEROR.

Lares. Your Majesty! It is with triumphant joy that I announce the decision of the Junta. The motion for Your Majesty's continuance in office was carried by the tremendous majority of twenty-one to two. It is an especial joy to us to be able to inform Your Majesty that dispatches from the Archbishop have just arrived urgently demanding the vindication of a monarchy. [MAXIMILIAN *throws a long look at* HERZFIELD, *who shakes his head.*] Your Majesty's person is the strongest check against the flood of destructive tendencies. Newly awakened enthusiasm will lead the young flag of the national army to victory. Sire! Look outside! This city is bedecked with flags. Long live Maximilian the First!

The ministers agree.

Max. [*rapidly, formal and shy*]. My honored ministers: It is with a full heart I thank you for this proof of your loyalty. I beg you to return without delay to the council chamber where I will follow you——

Gives them his hand for a moment.

Lares. Doesn't your Majesty wish to show himself to the crowd?

Max. [*frightened, childlike*]. Ah—please—no.

Siliceo. It would be expedient.

Max. [*idem*]. No—I don't want to——

Lares. Then I'll—[*Goes to the window and shouts.*] Long live the Emperor! [*Outside, hisses and cheers.* LARES *to the* EMPEROR.] Isn't your majesty pleased to hear that enthusiasm? The Archbishop, too, has given us the promise of a solemn Te Deum.

Max. We are deeply gratified. Can anything be done to make the crowd disperse?

Sil. Sire—you want to rest. We will arrange everything——

Lares. We are at the command of His Highness.

[*Ministers exit. Twilight*

Herz. [*pleading*]. May I send word to the captain of the frigate Dandolo?

Max. Do you really believe I'd go back to Austria as an interesting bankrupt? Am I to bear the sneering politeness with which my brother would tolerate me? Is that what you think of me? Blood has flowed for my sake. Blood creates obligations. Noblesse oblige.

Herz. The Empress's condition demands you go to Miramar.

Max. Her sublime worth demands I remain in Mexico.

Herz. Too late for that.

Max. Perhaps. But while the ministers were talking to me, God sent me the deciding thought. I shall return to my capitol and summon a general national congress to decide between Juarez and me.

Herz. [*raging*]. Juarez! Always wooing your idol, Juarez. What a theatrical idea.

Max. You are a petty man, Herzfield.

Herz. [*beside himself*]. Your magnanimity, Sire, cost you your position, it may cost your life.

Max. [*brusque, aloof*]. I will raise no objection to your protecting yours.

Herz. God help me—I can't defend myself from insult.

Max. [*a prey to his coldness*]. People have always criticised my choice of retinue. I do go too far below my station.

Herz. [*deeply touched. Blood-red. After a long pause*]. I will await your orders in the Capital.

[*Exits quickly*

Max. [*Stands immobile for a time, then hurries to the door*]. Herzfield, oh, Herzfield. [COLONEL LOPEZ *enters by the same door and meets him. He carries a lighted candelabra which he puts on the table.* MAX, *driven.*] Stay here, Lopez—you're a gay person—why do they torture me so?

Lop. Where does Your Majesty wish dinner served?

Max. No. I won't eat. Sit with me. Here! And tell me something. Anything, quickly. A story, quickly, quick!

Lop. [*unsure*]. I don't quite know—The court is so ascetic. Your Majesty means something—amusing? Does Your Majesty remember Princess Salm-Salm?

Max. [*Nods*]. Go on, go on——

Lop. A delicious woman, a maddening woman, and how she stares at Your Majesty! I envy those looks. The Princess has something intoxicating about the eyes. And she is young——

Max. [*Stamps his foot*]. Go on. Go on. . . .

Lop. Quite the aristocrat! And yet! You won't believe me, Sire, but the woman was a circus-rider—[*Soft violin music, very distant.* LOPEZ *interrupts himself to look out of the window in a lovesick manner.*] The cabinet-ministers are celebrating their victory in champagne.

Max. [*slowly*]. Victory!

Lop. How charming that sounds—quite European—Your Majesty remembers—the lights—the music—the—[*Closes his eyes and leans back, crosses his legs and takes on the remembered pose of a man of the world enjoying the motley night in a Parisian pleasure-room.*]

Max. They are expecting you, my dear Lopez. Hurry so as not to be late.

Lop. But Your Majesty wanted me to amuse you.

Max. No, no, go and enjoy yourself.

Lop. [*hesitating*]. But——

Max. [*quickly, in a choked voice*]. I cannot use you. I have work to do.

[LOPEZ *tiptoes out uncertainly, embarrassed. After a moment of music-filled solitude,* MAXIMILIAN *throws himself across the table, crying silently*

CURTAIN.

EIGHTH PICTURE

SCENE: *In the Palace at Mexico City. The Emperor's workroom. Rear a broad curtained door into his bedroom. Exit door right.* MAXIMILIAN *and* PIERRON.

Pier. So I decided to atone for the bad advice I unfortunately gave Your Majesty. I will renounce my country and cease to be a Frenchman. From this moment, Sire, I belong to you alone.

Max. I cannot accept this sacrifice.

Pier. [*Declaims*]. Napoleon is the incarnation of all the vanities and lies of modern society.

Max. Have you ever looked him in the eye? He is nothing but a pitiful cheat.

Pier. It was a noble gesture, Sire, not to accord the Marshal a farewell audience.

Max. I forgive Bazaine. But see him? I can't.

Pier. Does Your Majesty know he sold Buena Vista, the palace Your Majesty gave him? And to whom? The Archbishop!

Max. That is all over now.

Pier. But things are certainly not hopeless. The Imperial army is no trifle. The most famous creole generals gather about you: Here in the palace, Marquez, Miramon, and Mejia! Juarez has not one man of talent except Diaz. Well?

Max. This senseless murder horrifies me.

Pier. Sire, do you think that if you were not Emperor here less blood would flow in Mexico?

Max. It is difficult for you, as a soldier, Pierron, to sense the human aspect of this conflict.

Pier. Majesty! Don't reject my services.

Max. No, I will make use of you. But in another way—I speak now as a friend; my work in Mexico is over. My beautiful idea of a national congress to decide between Juarez and me is blocked by my own ministers. Like Indian reform, like everything. Therefore there was nothing left for me to do but draft my abdication again; this time it will have to be accepted. I have made a failure of myself as a human being and an Emperor. I shall go back to Europe to play the opera-bouffe part of an ex-monarch; to Austria, where I've lost the succession; back to Miramar, where an incurably sick woman lives out her suffering in darkened rooms because of me. I'm going back! Man, do you know what that means? I have bruised my heart to death for nights, but I am going back.

Turns away.

Pier. [*softly, head bowed*]. Sire! What do you ask of me?

DR. BASCH *enters*

Max. You will assist the Minister of Finance in drawing up an exact amount of all items that may be owing to the state. Do not forget the Empress' journey. I will apply my Austrian estates to the settlement of these debts. [*To* BASCH.] Well?

Basch [*Takes out a long galley-proof*]. I set the abdication manifesto in the state printing office with my own hands. The form is being kept secretly.

Max. Tell the printers to be ready tonight.

Pier. [*Shoves back the window-curtain a little*]. For God's sake! [*Muted sound of a military march, and of cavalry clattering over a poorly paved road.—Twilight.*] Bazaine and his staff are leaving Mexico, with music! They are passing right under the Emperor's window.

Basch. That isn't all. He manoeuvered to leave the fort unguarded just when Porfirio Diaz is advancing to our very gates.

Max. [*very pale*]. Oh, the Marshal is polite. He offered me a cabin on his ship.

Pier. [*sobbing*]. And I helped him!

[*Off quickly*

Max. [*helplessly*]. Men are good teachers, but I cannot seem to learn my lesson. Have you spoken to Herzfield?

Basch. Your Majesty should have found some word for him.

Max. It is so hard to forgive when one's self is in the wrong.

Basch. Herzfield left a few hours ago. He will arrange for rooms and horses at each relay-post. He will wait for us in Vera Cruz. Would Your Majesty like to correct the galley-proof? I would like to have it printed immediately.

Max. Good. It shall be published tomorrow morning. I shall lie down now, Doctor. The fever and pain are beginning again.

Basch. Your medicine is on the bed-table. I will be within ear-shot, at your immediate service. Remember—the manifesto, Your Majesty.

[*Lays proofs on the table and goes. The groom opens the curtain to the other room*

Max. Blasio? Didn't I give you leave to go?

Groom [*Goes slowly to the Emperor*]. Your Majesty——

Max. [*Starts back*]. Who are you?

Groom I beg that you do not interrupt me.

Max. I'll call.

Groom [*very quiet*]. Maximilian of Austria! You will not betray the faith I put in you. During my imprisonment in Puebla you accorded me the honor of a visit. Today I return the call—I, Porfirio Diaz! [MAXIMILIAN *silently retreats far from him.*] I put myself in mortal danger to serve you. Therefore I demand that you do not interrupt me. My time's short. I am here as Juarez' messenger. My message to you has four parts: Truth, accusation, judgment, pardon! The truth of your position, Maximilian. [*Shows him a paper.*] Here you see a letter from Bazaine offering to sell me mountains of ammunition. I did not answer this proposition nor the more important one offering me the capital and your person. The truth about your men: They are depressed, that is, morally and practically worthless. Your generals? They are all imperialists because they have recognized the Republic as their doom. The foundation of monarchy is stupidity and decadence. Do you know that, Prince von Hapsburg? [MAXIMILIAN *regains poise, comes nearer.*] The accusation! Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian. You came, the strangest sort of stranger, into this country which did not concern you. You made yourself the tool of Napoleon and of those financiers who gladly shed blood to float more stock.

Max. That is not true. The finest blood in Mexico offered me the crown.

Diaz. We both have a very clear idea of just how fine that blood is. You hindered the rightful government's performance of its high task only to glorify your proud name and satisfy the most boundless and irrational ambition. Your actions are based on self-deception and lies.

Max. Now, as then, I believe that only a free liberal monarchy can save this country.

Diaz. And the blood decree?

Max. I gave my own happiness, my wife, my health for Mexico.

Diaz. I am here to announce the law, not discuss it. Your own decree pronounces your sentence. The President would have to execute it. But instead of executing it, he pardons you.

Max. [*agonized*]. Pardon me, me! He, *me!*

Diaz. Yes, he, the cursed little Indian, pardons you, the Hapsburg. He, to whom you have done only evil; he, the man you drove out, pardons you. He renounces punishing you, and through you all monarchy and capitalistic sin. Can you measure the greatness of that pardon?

Max. [*hurrying to the door*]. I can't stand any more. I'll——

Diaz [*with great calm*]. Now I shall see what a Hapsburg is.

Max. [*Stops*]. You are under my protection, General.

Diaz. Your pardon depends on one condition: self-recognition. In the letter you will write to Benito Juarez you will make a complete renunciation, express your deep remorse, and ask for free conduct to Vera Cruz. Your only punishment is to be self-knowledge. That is my message. [MAXIMILIAN *is rigidly silent.*] You were strong enough for lies and evil. It would pain me if you were not strong enough for the humility of knowledge——[MAXIMILIAN *silent.*] It would pain me, Maximilian of Austria—— [*He waits.*] Give me ten seconds.

Disappears rapidly into the bedroom. MAXIMILIAN *throws off his paralysis and rings madly.* LOPEZ, BASCH *and* BLASIO *enter aghast.*

Max. Lopez! The generals! Instantly. Go! [LOPEZ *and* BLASIO *hurry away.*] Basch, break up the type sets of the abdication manifesto.

Basch. For heaven's sake, what does this mean?

Max. [*Stamps his foot*]. No questions.

Basch. Your Majesty?

Generals MARQUEZ, MIRAMON, MENDES, MEJIA *enter.* LOPEZ *behind them.*

Max. My Generals! Answer me on your souls' salvation. Is there any hope for us to defeat Juarez and Porfirio Diaz?

Marquez. By my soul's salvation, not only hope but certainty. The reds know Leonardo Marquez and fear him.

Miramon. By my soul's salvation. Miguel Miramon has won thirty-seven victories over the plebians. He guarantees it.

Mendez. By my soul's salvation.

Mejia [*in a trembling voice*]. Your Majesty—that ugly Juarez—it would be a great day——

Max. General Marquez, I appoint you chief of staff. Your suggestions?

Mar. Defensive with massed strength at Queretaro.

Mejia. Queretaro! Would that be wise?

Mar. It is my advice.

Max. Good! I'll go to Queretaro with the main body of the army. Now I thank you, gentlemen.

The Generals. Down with the republic! [*Off*

Basch [*with troubled eyes*]. Your Majesty! What a terrible misstep. What happened?

Max. Don't ask me!

Basch. But this is madness! Retract!

Lop. [*as if answering a voice, in a curious sing-song*]. Queretaro?

Basch. Queretaro! Why that's a trap.

Max. I know it.

The curtain falls.

CURTAIN.

END OF THE SECOND PHASE

THIRD PHASE

Ninth Picture

Scene: *Cerro de la Campana. Vedette by the Bell-Mound at Queretaro. An arid prairie. Right a pyramid of rifles.* Corporal John Nepomak Wimberger *of the former Austrian Volunteer's Brigade, the two infantrymen,* Yapitan, *a Mestizo, and* Polyphemio, *an Indian, are lying on the ground and are in the process of devouring their meal from two battered eating-bowls. The Corporal's uniform is halfway presentable in spite of its obvious defects, both Mexicans' uniforms are in a state of improbable decay. Their gray coutil (cotton) pants are smeared with the color of every filth in the world.* Yapitan *wears the red shirt of the Juaristas under his ragged blouse. He is a deserter. Cannons are heard in the distance.*

Corporal Wimberger [*a weathered man of forty, pushes his food away in disgust*]. Here, you dirt-eater. Take this too. [Polyphemio *reaches for the dish. It is impossible to tell if he is a cretinous idiot or merely lazy to the very limit of European comprehension.*] Yesterday your soldiers' witches stewed a moldering cat. This stuff tastes like carrion.

Polyphemio. Who can know, sir?

Wim. [*Spits three times*]. Ugh, if I hadn't found my girl in that lousy Queretaro!

Yapitan [*a rather appealing criminal's face*]. Why did you come here from your Austria, Corporal?

Wim. To meet you.

Yap. Ah yes, yes, you are a great gentleman. Were you for the Emperor over there too?

Wim. The family didn't always suit me—now in '48——

Yap. What's '48?

Wim. That was our revolution, ass! They'd make that red Juarez shut up over there.

Yap. Is that all you had? One revolution?

Wim. Yes, but *we* had barricades.

Yap. You know, Corporal, I was *this* little. And the fellows came from the soldiers' college and said: "Speak up for us, youngster! We're having a revolution. What side are you for?" The first revolution paid me three centavos a day. The second, half a year later, five centavos. Brother, I've helped seventeen revolutions, white and red. But not one of them paid more than ten centavos——Tell me—what did you get out of your revolution?

Wim. An invitation to enlist for long-term service.

Yap. And you never raised yourself any higher than corporal?

Wim. That will do for you—you half-breed tramp! Here I'm a dirty

volunteer corporal. At home I was a royal and imperial real retired private of the Prince of Hesse's infantry regiment. That's more than being a Mexican general like that Marquez. The dog runs away with half the garrison and leaves the Emperor in the lurch.

Yap. Do you know what they're saying? Marquez told someone the Emperor isn't an emperor at all. An Emperor has a gold uniform, and red stripes, and a plume. But that one with his blue coat? Not even a star! And on foot? And he talks just like one of us.

Wim. I wish you'd stayed over there with your Chinacos.

Yap. Maybe I'll be going back soon, Corporal. You're a hell of a corporal. And over there Juarez wouldn't let his officers hit us. Everything according to the rules. No punishment without a report. But I tell you: If your rifle's not cleaned: handcuffs. If you sleep on post: against the wall. When they are like that over there I'd rather be for the Emperor, here.

MAXIMILIAN *enters slowly. He wears a simple blue military coat with no distinctive feature. In his hand is a knotted stick. His expression is expectant, far away, his face browned and older. The beard no longer parted, less well groomed.*

Wim. [*saluting*]. Your Grace! Beg to report: Outpost Fifteen of Miramon's division.

Max. Thank you, my friend: Don't disturb yourselves. Go on with your meal. [YAPITAN *rises slowly.* POLYPHEMIO *takes no notice.*] I know you, Corporal, your name is——

Wim. Wimberger, your Grace.

Max. These soldiers?

Wim. That one's Yapitan, deserter.

Yap. Yah—you—

Max. [*with the weariness of a man who is obliged to repeat the same thing over and over again*]. Yapitan, you did right. You must not be ashamed. You are not fighting against Juarez, your old commander, nor for me. You are fighting for a national congress and peace.

Yap. [*with airy contempt*]. War? Peace? What difference do they make?

Max. We want to make Mexico's life a happy one.

Yap. Happy . . . unhappy? What difference does it make?

Max. You must have a family.

Yap. Maybe.

Max. [*horrified by such apathy*]. What were you by profession?

Yap. [*Grins, showing an amused expanse of teeth, laughs slowly*]. Ha—ha—ha—ha——

Wim. [*confidentially*]. Your Grace —Scum! Look what we've let ourselves in for.

Yap. Don't worry, Your Grace, we'll fight for you.

Max. [*conquering disgust*]. No one is fighting for me. We are fighting for the elections. Wimberger! Explain that to people. [*Indicates* POLYPHEMIO.] And he——?

Wim. Polyphemio, your Grace, Royalist.

Max. Hungry, Polyphemio? I'm sorry all of us haven't better food. What *is* that?

Poly. [*Munches unmoved*]. God knows.

MAXIMILIAN *takes the bowl and eats of the food with a heroic effort.*

Wim. Your Grace, don't eat that. It is not for our sort.

Max. In a few days our privations will be over. I have good news. General Marquez is bringing reinforcements.

LOPEZ *enters L.*

Excitement among soldiers in the camp.

Poly. [*Yawns*]. Who can tell, master?

Lop. Things are pretty bad, sire. Marquez——

Max. Don't despair, Lopez. I refuse to despair. After all, you are not giving up everything, my dear Lopez. I smell perfume.

Lop. Mille fleur. I should be delighted . . .

Max. My thanks.

Lop. [*Sees what* MAXMILIAN *is eating*]. Your Majesty doesn't have to go as far as that. You are forgetting your delicate health.

Max. I am not here to play Emperor. I am not here to lead an easier life than any of these poor hungry devils about me. Has the enemy battery over there on San Gregorio fired?

Wim. This is siesta-time.

POLYPHEMIO *and* YAPITAN *take their rifles and lie down on the escarpement.* WIMBERGER *starts to approach the Emperor.* MAXIMILIAN *starts, and falls back.*

Max. Yes? [*His face has the tortured look of migraine, shattered health, disgust, unbearable trouble. He pulls himself together quickly. He manages a forced smile.*] I know. It is hard. But I am with you, always with you.

Yap. [*Takes up his rifle*]. Halt. Who goes there?

Voice. A friend.

Wim. [*by the breastworks*]. Battle cry?

Voice. Return General Marquez.

Wim. Password?

Voice. Bell Mound.

Wim. Pass, friend.

An OFFICER *in a red Juarist shirt appears, takes off his sombrero and is unmasked as blonde* PRINCESS AGNES SALM, *who bows before the* EMPEROR.

Princess Salm. Your Majesty, I beg to report my arrival.

Max. [*frightened*]. But Princess! Where in the world do you come from?

Princess S. From Escobedo's camp where I have good friends.

Max. You make me angry. I mean it. You are the most foolhardy person I have ever known.

Princess S. Your Majesty! It is happiness for me to serve you.

Max. To all my other worries you've added worry for you. You do not lighten the responsibility I feel for everyone here.

Princess S. My action is a dream come true. You have always been my ideal.

Max. Ideal?

Princess S. I cut your pictures out of the papers. I collected your speeches. I wouldn't leave my husband alone until we came to Mexico. Everything bored me. Nothing to be loyal to. And then suddenly, an Emperor with radical ideas. An Emperor who sleeps on the bare ground. You have given my life meaning. In your name alone there's magic. Don't laugh!

Max. Princess.

Princess S. You are thinking that I'm only the vulgar tight-rope walker,

aren't you? Well you don't really have to look down on me. My Puritan family is respected at home in New England. I didn't have to be a tight-rope walker. I was a silly girl who ran away from home to be an artist. Ask my husband. He didn't have to lift me out of the gutter. But I didn't come here to talk about myself. I made my way through to Escobedo.

Max. What news there?

Princess S. Bad, I'm afraid. Marquez was beaten by Porfirio Diaz at San Lorenzo and he's shut up in the capital now. No more hope of reinforcements.

Max. No more hope of anything.

Princess S. Oh, no! There's one certain way left for Your Majesty. Break through into the Sierra Gorda! That's Mejia's home district and royalist to the last hamlet. Escobedo will not dare follow you. I know it. *Cannon shot.*

Lop. Your Grace!

Max. [*shyly*]. My round of the outposts is not yet over. I should like to make it alone. My dear Lopez, please accompany the Princess to the Hotel de Diligencias.

[*Salutes them all fleetingly and goes*

Lop. [*Comes close up to the* PRINCESS *and says softly*]. Madame, you do not answer my letters. [SALM *ignores him.*] You don't know me. Otherwise you would be kind.

Princess S. I'll be frank at any rate, Colonel Lopez. Pretty men of your type disgust me.

Lop. [*consumed with rage*]. Were you so cold in Escobedo's camp too, dear lady?

Princess S. That is an impertinence.

Lop. [*crushed*]. Ah, forgive me! Punish me. I love you. I can't bear this life any more. I hate myself. If I knew how, I'd send it all to hell! You alone can save me. Oh, your fragrance, your voice! I'm mad——

Princess S. You are sick.

Lop. [*earnestly*]. I am sick. There is no help for me in life. Only where there is a woman is there life for me. Quiet me. Have pity.

Princess S. Pity? I'm afraid of you!

Lop. You love the Emperor.

Princess S. Don't blaspheme.

Lop. If you love the Emperor, if you wish him well, you must, must, listen to me.

Princess S. Enough. Go now.

Lop. I was ordered to accompany you.

Princess S. I forbid you to follow me.

Lop. Then I will wait all night in the courtyard of the hotel for deliverance. You can't forbid me that.

Princess S. How is it the enemy officers know you so well, colonel?

Lop. I am what I am. It lies with you to avert a misfortune.

CURTAIN.

TENTH PICTURE

SCENE: *The Emperor's headquarters in the Monastery of La Cruz, in Queretaro. A terrace from which unbanistered steps lead down to a sort of courtyard. Right, a bare, rather low building rises above the terrace, its flat roof, the azotea, visible to the audience. The rear is shut off by the fortress-like wall. Right, on the terrace a table with candles and a glass of orangeade.* MAXIMILIAN *sits at the table.* GENERAL TOMAS

MEJIA *stands before him.* LOPEZ *leans silently against the house door. Two sentries are seen passing at intervals at the rear.*

Mejia [*His broad brown face beaming, is drawn up to his full poor little height. He holds a dispatch in his hand*]. Imagine, Sire, I am fifty years old. Being childless was my great sorrow. But yesterday, the saints be praised, I had a son. And he looks more like her, not ugly like me. The little thing has white skin. Now, Majesty, now Tomas Mejia isn't fighting for the Emperor alone, but for himself and his child too. We'll get out of this, Commander. We'll break through into the Sierra Gorda, into my mountains that love their old wildcat.

Max. I rejoice heartily with you, General. It must be a wonderful feeling. May your child, and you, and all of us some day be happy. Have all the arrangements been made?

Mejia. Down to the last detail. Three thousand civilians have taken over the trenches, and they'll begin to fire at six o'clock in the morning with the bad muskets we leave. That will make Escobedo attack the Cruz here on the east full strength. While we, six thousand of us, in massed formation will break through on the west by the Bell Mound. In two hours we'll be through.

Lop. [*suddenly, from the background, in a carefully monotonous voice*]. Why wasn't the sortie made yesterday according to the original plan?

Max. I am not at all dissatisfied.

Lop. [*dreamily*]. Too bad. Too bad.

Max. What orders have the Hussars and my escort?

Lop. I have just come from inspection. The men are sleeping in full equipment; the horses are saddled.

Mejia. Good.

Max. And the reveille?

Mejia. At five.

Max. [*going to* MEJIA]. My dear friend Mejia. I congratulate you again with all my heart.——And now lie down. You must sleep.

Mejia [*deeply moved*]. Oh, Sire, I don't know why I'm so moved.

[*Off across the court*

Max. You have served me very unselfishly from the beginning, Lopez. I want to thank you. I want you to take this medal for your bravery.

Lop. [*frightened*]. No. I couldn't, your Majesty.

Max. Your appointment as General was rejected, I regret to say. The generals declared against you. They drivel about a patriotic misstep in your youth, even of felony. My God, these army men seem to have a great feeling for other people's honor——

Lop. [*as if seeking a ground for bitterness*]. And didn't your Majesty try to impose your will upon the generals?

Max. It would have been a poor time to do that.

Lop. [*with a slight trace of sentimental maliciousness*]. You are right, Sire. Promotion means so little after all.

Max. And so I can only reward your faithfulness with a request. You have a good pistol. If I am threatened with imprisonment release me with a bullet.

Lop. [*with glowing, pleading eyes*]. Would not your Majesty rather shoot me? Now?

Max. [*Stares at him a moment, keenly*]. What's wrong, Lopez?

Lop. Your Majesty, Queretaro is two meters long and half a meter broad. We have lived in this cage for three months. Sire! Have you known the awful moment when the soul is strangled in loneliness? You want to run, run, run away! Out into the open. But walls everywhere, dirty soldiers, hostlers with watering-pails. [*Driven.*] Your Majesty, I'd give my life to have both of us far away, in the light, in Paris.

Basch [*Comes out of the house*]. The enemy let through a bundle of European papers.

Max. How apropos. We can satisfy your longing for Paris in a moment, Lopez. Sit down, gentlemen. Basch will read to us.

Basch [*After seating himself, begins to read off the headlines*]. "World's Fair"——"Paris an Enchanted Sea of Light"——"Triumphal Ovation for Napoleon on the Champ de Mars"——"Flower Carnivals"——

Lop. [*dreaming*]. Flower Carnivals—there are so many wonderful things in the world——

Basch. Which humanity could do without.

Max. Yes.

Basch. "Jules Favre Addresses the Chamber on Mexico."

Max. That concerns us. Well?

Basch [*reading aloud*]. "Did they think to overcome republican ideals and the iron desire for justice of a Juarez so lightly? Maximilian is"——[*Checks.*]

Max. What am I? Out with it!

Basch. Majesty!

Max. [*Takes the paper from him. He reads*]. "Maximilian is a real Don Quixote"——[*He gives back the paper, laughing*]. Do you think that's so terrible? There are times when a decent man can't do anything better.

Lop. [*Starts brusquely out of a long apathy*]. Sire, I must make my round of inspection.

Max. Your hand, Lopez. Good night.

[LOPEZ *exits over the steps, rear, almost running. Before he disappears he stops once more without looking back at the* EMPEROR

Basch [*shaking his head*]. These creoles are out and out epileptics.

Max. He has a pleasant voice. His nature attracts me as Mexico does.

Basch. If he only had the right look in his eyes.

Max. Why are you nervous?

Basch. I admire your Majesty's calm.

Max. Look out there, Basch, at the jagged peaks of the Sierras, under these alien stars. A weird shorthand. I feel as if I understood this land, as I understand Juarez and myself. The fragrance of the mango trees, poisonously sweet. Can you smell it?

Basch. Wind of the Mexican plateau. Your Majesty . . .

Max. [*his soul struggling with Porfirio Diaz*]. Self-knowledge? We never have more knowledge of ourselves than we can bear. I have learned to bear a great deal of it. Pain does not educate, only danger. She is the mother of our real being. Everything is dross and melts away that cannot stand the test of extreme

peril. Birth, title, fame, ambition, art—laughable. My body is sick. But I feel this strange romantic soil beneath my feet as a wanderer senses the journey's end. [*Pause.*] I am so strangely happy. For the first time in Mexico. And happy men are lucky.

The bell of La Cruz chimes the hour.

Basch. Only three more hours to sleep. . . .

Max. [*Looks out into the night once more*]. Whatever comes it won't be ugly.

Off into the house. DR. BASCH *follows with the candelabra. The starry summer night is gradually clouded in the deepest blackness. The clock of La Cruz strikes two, then three, at measured intervals. The unreal space of these hours is filled with all kinds of echoing night-noises: stamping, pawing, neighing horses, backing, infrequent steps. Far away sounds the harsh, recurrent song of a drunkard. After the last stroke has sounded, two men with lanterns appear and circle the court. They disappear and come back with a noiseless detachment of soldiers, some of whom carry torches which they quickly extinguish. The group enter the house in dead silence, emerging on the flat roof. Meanwhile one of the men with lanterns sets double guards at all the exits from the court. It strikes four. Dusk, twilight, and the dawn light follow each other quickly.* LOPEZ *and the Republican Colonel,* JOSÉ RINCON GALLARDO *become clearly visible. The latter allows the pistol he has been holding to Lopez' head to sink.*

Rincon Gallardo. No treachery, there. Have we all the strategic places occupied?

Lop. [*rigid as a sleepwalker*]. All—

Gal. Nothing overlooked?

Lop. Nothing.

Gal. [*Grabs* LOPEZ *and hurls him to the ground*]. Dirty traitor, why did you do it?

Lop. [*Kneeling, raises an empty face*]. I don't know.

Gal. You don't need money?

Lop. No. Not for money.

Gal. Did he do you harm?

Lop. Only good.

Gal. You are the republic's first disgrace.

Lop. [*Chokes out*]. Wake up—I—wake up—God let me wake up—I—

Gal. Get up. Wake the Archduke. Never mind about taking prisoners. Understand? Go on.

Lop. [*Bellows*]. Treason! Treason! The Emperor's betrayed! The enemy is in La Cruz. Treason——

[*Dashes into the house*

Gal. Queretaro's taken. But my hands are dirty. [*He wipes them with a handkerchief.*] Ugh!

The great southern sun rises. The shadows grow violet. The traitor's cry is repeated. Half-dressed men run out of the house and from all over: officers, soldiers, hostlers, servants with baggage. Tremendous confusion. DR. BASCH, DON BLASIO *and* GRILL *appear.*

Max. [*Steps out of the house, quite calmly, with studied control, at the height of the noise which ceases instantly*]. Quiet, brothers. Nothing is lost. Go to the Bell Mound. Quiet.

The Emperor's men rally about him. MAXIMILIAN *goes to* RINCON GALLARDO. *One Juarist soldier starts for* MAXIMILIAN *with his bayonet.*

Courtesy of The Theatre Guild

"Long live Maximilian—No, not I!"

Gal. [*Looks off-stage—calls to his sentries*]. Back, they are republicans. Let them pass.

Max. Sir, I am the Emperor.

Gal. I don't know of any Emperor. As to this unnecessary sword, let me remind you of the intruder's blood decree. "Whoever is found bearing arms"—you may remember the context. [*Steps away. Sudden sound of artillery. The town sounds the attack. The Emperor's men in a dull, jerky rhythm, fade with fear.*]

Soldier [*who has crowded to the front*]. Long live the Emperor.

[*He is shot and falls*

Mejia. Long live Maximilian.

Juarist soldier threatens him but GALLARDO *motions him not to shoot.*

Max. [*softly*]. Long live Maximilian—No, not I!

CURTAIN.

ELEVENTH PICTURE

SCENE: *Government seat of President Juarez at San Luis Potosi—a narrow office, resembling the one at Chihuahua, but better kept.* PRINCESS SALM *in a travelling costume and veil. She is glowing with excitement and striding about the room like a man.*

Herz. [*battleworn, aged*]. The court-martial in the theatre at Queretaro was nothing but a farce. The death sentence was pronounced long ago. It's over. We won't be able to save the Emperor.

Princess S. We won't. That sounds like you, you cowardly Austrian. I had everything ready for his escape. Everything! But it failed. [*Stands before* HERZFIELD.] The next time we must save him, Herzfield. We will! We must! [PORFIRIO DIAZ *enters. She goes to meet him.*] The finest man in Mexico, Porfirio Diaz! General, you abandoned your siege of the Capital. That must mean that you won't allow an absolutely innocent man to be slaughtered.

Diaz [*in cold earnest*]. I have no other business here in San Luis Potosi, except to submit a report.

Herz. [*Bows to the general*]. Herzfield is my name, the boyhood friend of Maximilian of Austria. Oh, why, General, can't you see what a saint he is? You, you would be the very man to shield him.

Diaz. Archduke Maximilian is a criminal.

Herz. A criminal? Merciful God! Under what law? I swear by all that's holy: Maximilian acted in good faith. They would give him no rest. The whole official world said yes.

Diaz. A proof that their ethics are criminal.

Herz. And also a proof that Maximilian's innocent.

Diaz. Neither nature, man or God. None of them can protect a weak man's ideal of innocence. If your friend had been more mature, more clear, he would have realized in time that he must become the victim of a gambling voluptuary and feudal desperado. He is their victim now.

Princess S. [*pained*]. Talk, always talk.

Herz. Why don't you hold Napoleon and Bazaine to account, General?

Diaz. Unfortunately, the President is forced to be content with their scapegoat.

Herz. [*Pleads excitedly*]. Maximilian is a beautiful person in the holiest

sense of the word. I beg of you to see nothing but the man himself. His only crime was to allow himself to be named Emperor. But didn't he come into this country like a savior? His great dream was to free the Indians. That very fact ought to have placated Juarez, the Indian.

Diaz. Don Benito Juarez has no passions. Nothing can bribe him. He does, not good, but right, and that is the only thing which is good in the end.

Herz. [*with ominous calm*]. No sophistry, General.——Facts! The Republic has won. But no great power has recognized the new government, as yet. Behind Maximilian von Hapsburg stand the ruling powers of the entire world. Even the United States, your sister-republic, condemns the death sentence. The execution would be a folly the President dare not commit. He'll be swept away by the world's horror. European fleets will land in Vera Cruz. The revenge of the united monarchs will smother your party and Mexico in blood.

Diaz [*quietly*]. I advise you, my valued friend, to renounce that argument. We have won more than a party victory in a civil war. Our triumph strikes at the very heart of decadent society throughout the world. Let the ghost of titles and gold dare try to rise. Here and everywhere it's dead of its own rottenness. I am sorry Prince Maximilian is a higher type of man. But he must fall with the social order from which he cannot escape.

Princess S. Man, how can you talk of victory and triumph while a lovely creature, a gentle child, is being murdered? You are all, all devils. You all talk madness. And no one sees the dear eyes, no one feels the clean breath, no one the sweet warm life, oh, no one ——[*Breaks into tears.*]

Herz. [*trembling*]. General Porfirio Diaz, after the President you are the most powerful man in the new state. Weigh your responsibility. They pronounced the death sentence on the Emperor the day before yesterday. Three hours later the execution should have taken place. A human being waited three hours for certain death. Three hours. I ask you, can you feel the monstrousness of those three hours? What is death compared to them? Do you want that unthinkable, barbarous torture repeated? No. You can't. It is your duty, General, your duty before earth and heaven, to secure his pardon—Well, why don't you speak?

Diaz. I know my duty better than you.

Herz. Then I won't waste my time. Perhaps I'll find a human being among the ministers.

[*Exit*

Princess S. [*Runs across the room sobbing. Suddenly she calms herself, removes hat and veil, smoothes her hair, looks for a mirror*]. Lord, how mussy I am— Maybe I'm getting old—Look at me, Porfirio Diaz! I'm told I'm pretty—I'd listen to any traitor in the world——

Diaz. Be quiet, Madame. I won't dishonor you by understanding——

Princess S. [*Goes to him wildly*]. And he spared you when you were a prisoner in Puebla, the stupid, stupid man. Why didn't he kill you, why?

Diaz. I repaid that and I will repay it to the end.

Princess S. [*embracing him violently*]. You will help me, you will save him!

Diaz [*Forces her from him and steps back*]. We left his door open till the last moment.

Princess S. Oh, the poor man is so holy, and stupid. He couldn't do it. —General! To the President! Quick! You are our hope. Quick!

Diaz. What can I do? Now it is too late. The court has spoken.

Eliz. [*Enters quickly*]. General! A most important despatch from Italy.

Diaz [*Reads*]. "Caprera. To Juarez and all Republicans in Mexico." [*Looks up.*] That is Garibaldi. Now, woman, pray. Garibaldi is the President's idol, the one human being he loves. They were friends—[*Unfolds the despatch and reads*]. "I, Garibaldi, foe of all bloodshed, beg you for Maximilian's life. Forgive him. My fellow citizens whose blood the gory Hapsburgs shed in torrents beg you to forgive him. The people are generous: They always conquer and they always forgive." If anyone can save him it is Garibaldi. Come, Elizea, quick, to the President.

[*Both off*

Princess S. Garibaldi, help us!

Herz. [*Enters in black despair*]. Every door closed. If I could only get to him. But Queretaro's far, so far——

He closes his eyes in terrible exhaustion.

Princess S. Man, something good, something important just happened. Put your mind on this, hard, hard. Make your thought beat against Juarez. Think, "Help, Garibaldi."

Herz. If I had some relays of horses, maybe——

Princess S. [*Stamps her foot*]. Think, "Help Garibaldi." [*A shrill ringing.*] What is that?

Enter ELIZEA *right, an* OFFICIAL *left, quickly.*

Eliz. A glass of water to the President's room.

Official. Water? They never ask for that. What happened?

Eliz. Nothing, nothing. A little dizziness.

Official. Dizziness? Shall I——

Eliz. Nothing at all. Hurry.

OFFICIAL *motions a Servant to go.*

Princess S. [*Walks stiffly, front stage, and whispers sharply toward heaven*]. God in Heaven, let him die. I promise never to love another man. Let Juarez die. I promise to give up every joy. Let him die. I'll sacrifice my horse. Let him die. I'll never wear silk or batiste again. Let him die.

OFFICIAL *takes a glass of water from a servant and hands it to* ELIZEA.

Diaz [*Enters*]. Go. [ELIZEA *and* OFFICIAL *go.* DIAZ, *in a trembling voice*]. My appeal was no use. Garibaldi's plea was in vain. The President signed the death warrant. Maximilian dies tomorrow at sunrise.

Princess. S. And no one's with him, no one who loves him.

She sways weakly.

CURTAIN.

TWELFTH PICTURE

SCENE: *Maximilian's cell in the Capuchin Monastery at Queretaro. A bare narrow, shallow room. An iron bed. A little mahogany table with a crucifix and silver candelabra. Night.*

Max. [*sitting on the edge of the bed, wearing his blue military overcoat, unbuttoned. He holds a letter in his hand. His lips murmur words of whose meaning he is not aware*]. The will to love— is not yet love— [BASCH *enters right, quietly. He seldom raises his deeply bowed head during the entire scene and avoids looking at* MAXIMILIAN. *He has brought a piece of clothing which he hangs on a nail.*] Yes, come in, dear doctor, I called you.

Basch. Your Majesty was sleeping so peacefully an hour ago.

Max. I am frightened by my sleeping. It is a great waste of time under the circumstances. That is why I got up and wrote a long letter to Juarez. How late is it?

Basch. Four o'clock. Shall I keep the letter?

Max. Destroy it. I'm afraid it's full of phrases and pathos. That would be bad form. Speech is incidental, death decides.

Basch. I am absolutely sure. Juarez daren't do it.

Max. He must. And I myself approve him. I am guilty, my dear Basch. And that thought gives me peace. It would be much, much harder to bear injustice. I've thought it all out to the very end.

Basch. Such justice is not human.

Max. Guilt is not to be great enough for one's deeds. Failure is guilt. My idea of a radical monarchy was unreal. Therefore the error, the lie must be in myself: guilt. The age of royalty is over. In the shipwreck of the privileged classes poor little kings who are not kings must perish. The hour of the dictators has come. Juarez.

Basch. Woe to the victorious masses.

Max. And yet I m not like Franz Joseph. He shirked his destiny. Mine held me fast. You know I went to Queretaro with my eyes open, Basch. I had to go, just as Lopez had to betray me.

Basch. Sire, you are bitterly revenged on Lopez. He is despised by friend and foe.

Max. The poor devil. He was not big enough for the mystery of betrayal.

Basch [*softly*]. Poor Herzfield— if we had only listened to him.

Max. [*Pulls a ring from his finger*]. Take this ring to him. Yes, good old Herzfield. I was not fit for life, but I am fit for death. And that is not a little thing. [*A wailing and weeping becomes audible.*] That is Mejia. Poor little Mejia next door. If Juarez had only pardoned Mejia and Miramon. Oh, that poor little Indian Mejia.

Basch. Can you still have pity with time flying?

Max. But Mejia has such strong ties. He has a wife and a son. How terrible that is! I am free. Carlotta——

Basch. The Empress is at rest——

Max. So they say. But perhaps only to make my death easier. Why? Death is all that's left to me. Since my wife is gone I've felt death in me. It is my inmost self. It is myself and all I have.

Basch [*uncontrollably*]. No, no it mustn't happen.

Max. You are still alive. How could you understand it—this huge——

Sentry [*cries repeated in the distance*]. All's well! All's well!

Max. Did you find a black coat?

Basch [*Takes the piece of clothing from the nail*]. Here. It's quite shabby.

Max. It will do.

Exchanges the litevka for the long coat.

Basch. This tie, as well——

Max. [*Takes it*]. No mirror. A great deprivation. Look and see if I've left anything in the pockets.

Basch. An unopened letter.

Max. The last letter from my wife. I haven't had the courage to read it. [*Holds the letter in his hand, hesitating.*] I can't. Basch, you open it. Read it.

Sits on the bed.

Basch [*Opens the envelope, and reads*]. "My dearly beloved darling! Everything is splendid. You have triumphed. They are afraid to poison me now and leave me in peace. You are part of God's victory over the Archenemy. Your pure heart has changed everthing. Your eyes look down at me from every place and I hear your voice everywhere. I was to blame for everything. But now I am happy. For you are the lord of the earth, the sovereign of the universe." [MAXIMILIAN *has fallen back, fainting.* BASCH *bends over him weeping, raises his head, strokes it.*] Oh, my dear friend—Don't wake up again—beloved soul——

Morning dawns.

Max. [*Comes back to consciousness*]. Curious. A vision—a childish dream—far away. Did I dream it before? For a flash of time one understands everything.

Basch. What? What?

Max. Only a picture—it vanishes—a mountain—I come nearer—a pyramid—men up and down in lawyer's red robes—wise old men with animal faces—and at the summit, carved in stone, Juarez—Juarez—at last he comes to me—But I am not afraid—I draw deep breaths—I sing—No, no! Not like that, it wasn't like that.

First ray of daylight.

Sentries [*calling*]. All's well! All's well! All's well!

Max. [*Moves himself. In a hard voice. Stands erect, at attention*]. Thank God. It's morning.

Enter CANON SORIA *and a* SACRISTAN *in full regalia.*

Soria. Your Highness, I have read a silent mass for you three gentlemen in General Miramon's cell.

Max. You go first, Abbé. I'm coming.

Sor. Oh God, Highness, what a handsome young man you are. Why did this have to happen to me, me with my soft heart? Forgive me—I can't help myself. [*His voice fails* him.]

Max. [*smiling*]. Now I'll even have to comfort my own father confessor. [*Softly, to himself, with the clearest control.*] Only nothing false now. No lying now.

[SORIA *and* SACRISTAN *exit*

BASCH [*Pulls himself together and talks very quickly*]. Your Majesty, I know we will see each other again. Still—I have a good medicine for sinking body and soul into senselessness. I beg you, Sire, to take this powder.

Max. [*Interrupts him*]. Do you want to rob me of my last possession? Only the body knows fear. It shall not dominate me. You mean well, Dr. Basch. I thank you. But I want to live my death.

[*Off by the door rear,* BASCH *follows him with his eyes. Then he takes the blue military coat and presses it to him. Bright morning light. Crescendo drum and trumpet signals. The exit door is thrown open. An* OFFICER *enters with* SOLDIERS *following.* BASCH *raises his hands in horror, recoils and sinks onto the bed, deathly pale.*

CURTAIN

END OF THE THIRD PHASE

EPILOGUE

THIRTEENTH PICTURE

SCENE: *Before the Capuchin Church at Queretaro. A wide plaza. In the rear a wall of motley humanity moving from one side of the stage to the other with backs to the audience. The inhabitants of Queretaro are waiting for the President's entry into the city to view Maximilian's body. Over the heads of the crowd rise the red penon-lances of the supremos poderos, the republican, guard who are keeping the road free for the President. The noise of many people, the yells of peddlers, and newspaper sellers sound distantly. The foreground is entirely dead. Right a ruined palace—with a few steps leading up to its door. A burning day.* PRINCESS SALM *and* HERZFIELD *enter left.*

Herz. Give me your revolver, Princess.

Princess S. I'm going to push my way through to him in the church and shoot him as he stands by the Emperor's coffin.

Herz. Hysterical folly.

Princess S. Can Juarez go on living?

Herz. Give it to me. [*Forces the weapon from her.*]

Princess S. And you are Maximilian's friend.

Herz. He would hate this madness. Would this help him? Now?

Princess S. Herzfield, you are horribly sensible. I'm not. I can't bear to have everthing pass off so quietly. A man died who was like a god. Maximilian is the loneliest dead man in all the world. Shan't he be granted the rights of the dead? Juarez crumpled over his coffin? And I—let me be.

Herz. Don't you know we have no right to revenge? Don't you know that we and the Emperor have always been strangers here, Princess?

Princess S. Oh, don't think I was in love with the Emperor. I saw him so few times. He didn't ever notice me. What could I have asked of him, anyway? It was something entirely different, something glorious! Herzfield! Yes I've been loved and have loved. But suddenly I see this trusting, luminous being. Spring fragrance in a soul. Filth melts before him. He enchants and elevates by simply being. I——[*Interrupts herself.*] Oh how can I go on living?

Enter DR. BASCH, *right*

Herz. Basch! At last!

Basch. Herzfield.

They embrace with deep emotion.

Herz. [*when* BASCH *starts to speak*]. Don't say anything.

Basch. You are right. [*Pause.*] He was big in death.

Herz. Why did he have to die? For whom?

Basch. Don't you believe that every beauty and every sacrifice sings on to swell the precious light of the world?

Princess S. [*tears glistening in her eyes*]. Yes, I believe it.

Herz. I believe in futility.

Princess S. No!

Basch. Poor Maximilian who had to fail in everything but death.

Herz. His love found no object. He dreamed of legitimacy and remained the most illegitimate being on earth. For the only legitimate thing on earth is bestial obscene ambition.

Basch. Or implacable power,—Juarez.

Crowd in the distance cry "Juarez!"

Princess S. He's coming. Do you hear?

HERZFIELD *weeps uncontrollably.*

Black whirl of drums and roar from the crowd.

Princess S. [*excited*]. Do you hear?

The wail of people becomes more and more astir. Red flags are raised, the pennons dance.

Basch. I can't see him.

Herz. I don't want to see him.

Princess S. I will see him.

Ascends the steps on the right and looks over the heads of the crowd.

Basch. Why has the murderer come? Drunk with victory? Curious?

Herz. Juarez does nothing unnecessary. Be sure of that. The dead Emperor is a great asset for the Republic. Europe will grovel now.

The whining drums and the noise come nearer and nearer.

Princess S. [*watching the invisible parade*]. Guardistas—now the generals—all in red shirts—Escobedo leads the group—Porfirio Diaz is not among them—that is fine of Diaz. [*The crowd's madness increases.*] *The* ministers—and now——

Herz. and *Basch* [*excited in spite of themselves*]. And now? He?

Princess S. No, a servant with a wreath. A very official wreath with a black bow.

The Crowd [*Howls*]. Juarez!

The drums thunder onto the stage.

Princess S. There, a little old man—his coat fits badly—he walks carefully.

Basch. His face?

Princess S. Politely quiet. But he sees no one—no one dares to come close. I couldn't have done it, Herzfield. [*The noise from the crowd is suddenly muted.*] He is standing on the first step. He raises his right hand a little—He speaks—I can't hear what he's saying.

Herz. [*overcome by bitterness*]. He enters the church. He stands before the Emperor. The Emperor? He's nothing more now than a piece of furniture they're haggling over. In three months it will all be a yellow newspaper clipping, in one year a story, and then—

Princess S. [*Comes to the man*] Juarez is the great, the real master of this age. Let us go.

Herz. And then blood, always more blood spilled and then forgotten.

Princess S. [*softly, as if she were ashamed to have forgotten for a moment*]. Maximilian—

The Crowd [*convulsively*]. Juarez!

A band plays the Chinaca, Mexico's rapid revolutionary hymn.

CURTAIN.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Suggestions to Guide the Pupil in a Thoughtful Reading of the Stories in the Fiction Unit

THE SIRE DE MALETROIT'S DOOR

Robert Louis Stevenson

If the story seems unreal recall other stories of adventure during the Middle Ages which you have read.

Are the characters real flesh and blood people or do they seem mere types?

Is it possible to stop reading at any place in the story or is the suspense so great you wish to hurry on to the end?

Other stories of romantic adventure which will interest you are: "The Legend of the Three Beautiful Princesses" from *The Alhambra* by Washington Irving and "How the Brigadier Came to the Castle of Gloom" in *Exploits of Brigadier Gerard* by A. Conan Doyle.

THE LOST PHOEBE

Theodore Dreiser

Notice how skillfully the author paints his picture of desolation and despair from the opening details of a house gone to ruin, a drab life on the farm, the death of Phoebe, the pathos of Henry's search for his wife, and the heart-breaking effect of the call, "O-o-o Phoebe."

Is the sadness of the picture relieved or accentuated by the joy Henry felt as he leaped from the cliff?

For another story of the same tone, read Kate Douglas Wiggin's story, "Tom of the Blueberry Plains."

THE STICK-IN-THE-MUDS

Rupert Hughes

Are there expressions in the story which startle you by their vividness?

Do you know the allusions to the various stages of Shakespeare's life, to Balboa, to Vergil's Ecologues, to Olympus?

Have you ever read any books like *Nick Carter*, or *Old Cap Collier?* Why are they not as good as *Ivanhoe* and *The Scottish Chiefs?*

Can you see any parallel between this story and Grey's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"?

THE CHINK AND THE CHILD

Thomas Burke

Do you like the introductory paragraph which serves somewhat the same purpose as a prologue does in a play?

Do you know a foreign district in any large city? Have you ever visited Chinatown? Does this story give you the oriental atmosphere?

How would you classify the story?

THE GIFT OF THE MAGI

O. Henry

Who were the Magi? In case you do not know, read Matthew II, 1–12.

Why did O. Henry use this title?

What parts of the story seem most humorous? Is the humor that of incident or expression?

Is the ending of the story purely humorous?

THE STAR CHILD

Oscar Wilde

What points in the story do you note that are characteristic of all fairy stories?

What is the thesis of the story? Do you know any other fairy stories based on the same theme?

What do you think of the concluding paragraph? How can you account for it?

The charm of the style reminds one of that of William Morris' stories. Read "The Story of the Glittering Plain," "The Roots of the Mountains," and "The House of the Wolfings."

THE THREE STRANGERS
THOMAS HARDY

What is your feeling after reading the opening paragraphs in the story?

Note especially good descriptive sentences.

If you like Hardy's style, you will enjoy some of his novels. Try *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *The Return of the Native*, and *Far from the Madding Crowd*.

THE HEART OF LITTLE SHIKARA
EDISON MARSHALL

What things interest you immediately in the boy? Does he seem a real child?

What details in the story furnish local color?

Note the suspense created by old Khusru, who prophesied Nahara's seeking of vengeance. Note also the suspense in the description of the fight with the crocodile.

Compare the interpretation of the laws of the jungle with that of Kipling's *Jungle Book*.

If you like this story, you will enjoy those in Kipling's *Plain Tales from the Hills*.

THE WAKE
DONN BYRNE

What is a wake? Are wakes a custom today in any community you know?

How is the emotional tone preserved throughout the story?

Note that the author makes you feel the greatness of love and of death—in their presence there is no room for pettiness.

Notice the style of writing from the description of the sound of conversation in the opening paragraph to the simplicity of the conclusion where there is so great an understanding that there is no talk of forgiveness.

THE TODAY TOMORROW
MARGARET PRESTON MONTAGUE

What details furnish the local color here?

Does Tony Beaver remind you of any other character in fiction?

In connection with this story, you will enjoy reading the tales of Paul Bunyan, lumberjack hero, in The Century Magazine.

THE GREY ANGEL
JOHN GALSWORTHY

Can you analyze Galsworthy's method of painting the portrait? What are Madame's most striking characteristics?

How many stories of the Great War can you recall in which the leading character is an old lady? If you like this story, read some others in Galsworthy's last collection of short stories—*Caravan*.

APPENDIX B

SUGGESTIONS TO GUIDE THE PUPIL IN A THOUGHTFUL READING OF NOVELS

HUGH WYNNE, FREE QUAKER
S. WEIR MITCHELL

Is the chief interest in this novel character portrayal or historical background? How are the two elements blended?

Do you get a clear picture of the Revolutionary days? Do you feel that you know Washington?

What are the outstanding characteristics of the early Quakers seen in this novel.

If you like the picture of the Quakers given by Mitchell, you will enjoy reading John Woolman's *Journal*.

RICHARD CARVEL
WINSTON CHURCHILL

In its picture of the Revolutionary War, does the book make you feel the friendliness that thinking people of the time in England felt for America?

To what extent was 18th century life in America copied from life in England?

Are the pictures of Burke, Fox, Franklin, Washington, and John Paul Jones historically accurate?

An interesting study of 18th century life in England may be made by looking up all unknown references you come across in the story, *e.g.*

Press gangs for the English navy—Chapter 18

Dr. Johnson and his group at the Cheshire Cheese—Chapter 23

Life in a sponging-house—Chapter 24

Horace Walpole, Strawberry Hill, The Castle of Otranto—Chapter 26

Josiah Wedgewood—Chapter 31

Mr. Foote—Chapter 32

David Garrick—Chapter 36.

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

Thomas Hardy

This has often been called a prose drama. Can you see why?

Most of Hardy's stories are built on man's conflict not with other men but with nature. How is this true of this novel?

How can you explain the fact that Hardy's pessimism is not depressing yet is convincing?

Compare the humorous rustics with those in Shakespeare's plays.

Note the element of tragedy introduced by the story of Fanny and Troy.

Do you consider Gabriel Oak and Bathsheba great characters?

Do you see any evidences in the book of Hardy's having been an architect for years?

You will probably enjoy *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *The Return of the Native.*

THE LIGHT THAT FAILED

Rudyard Kipling

Can you state briefly the essential story of *The Light That Failed* abstractly without using the names of characters or places?

What is admirable in the characters of Maisie, Dick, and Torpenow?

Do you blame or pity Maisie? Why?

Is the story a tragedy because the hero dies?

What is the most tragic thing in it?

Point out details that mitigate the hardness and sordidness.

THE BRIMMING CUP

Dorothy Canfield Fisher

How would you describe the outlook on life taken by Neal and Marise Crittendon?

What was the noblest element in their lives and characters? Can you cite occasions when they were true to the ideals they adopted early? Would you call such fidelity easy or difficult?

Can you see any of the characteristics of the parents which crop out in the children? Do the children seem real? What are some of their typical juvenile acts and ideas?

Do you see any relation between the setting of the story and the characteristics of any of its people?

Should you like Eugenia Millis? How would you comment on her outlook on life? How on that of Vincent Marsh?

THE VIRGINIAN

Owen Wister

What caused the Virginian's popularity?

Which incidents seem to you most amusing?

What is your opinion of the Virginian's spoken English?

Show how the nature and experiences of Shorty resembled those of the hen, "Emily."

What is meant by the statement, "Grandmother Stark flashed awake deep within the spirit of her descendant and she made a haughty declaration of war"?

Which of the characters in *The Virginian* would you choose as your companion on a hike? Why?

What picture of the West do you get?

THE AWAKENING OF HELENA RITCHIE

Margaret Deland

What was Helena's awakening? Why did she need awakening? What brought it about?

Was Dr. Lavender justified in wanting to take David from Helena?

What attitude would society of today take towards Helena's actions?

In order to be happy must one live according to accepted standards and conventions?

Did you like little David? Why?

TYPHOON

Joseph Conrad

How does the simple sea-captain prove his courage and skill in the hour of distress?

What is your opinion of Captain MacWhirr's method of distributing the recovered money belonging to the Chinamen?

Compare the character of Captain MacWhirr and the captain of the fishing smack in *Captains Courageous.*

THE ABLE McLAUGHLINS

Margaret Wilson

Can you distinguish the qualities that gave this novel the first place in the Harper $2,000 Prize Novel Competition over more than 750 competing novels submitted by authors in "every state in the union, in the Philippine Islands, in China, and in Europe"?

Does the story make clear the following statement: "To Wully, as to his father, there was first always, to be sure, the promise of money in growing grain, and he needed money. But besides that, there was more in it than he ever said—all that keeps farm-minded men farming."

An interesting comparison may be made between this novel and Hamlin Garland's *Son of the Middle Border.*

SO BIG

Edna Ferber

When this story appeared as a serial, the title was *Selina.* Do you think Miss Ferber gained or lost in the change to *So Big?*

What did Dirk De Jong learn about life that made him say to himself, "You're nothing but a rubber stamp, Dirk De Jong. Nothing but a rubber stamp"?

What impressions of Chicago do you get from the story?

ALICE ADAMS

Booth Tarkington

Note how gradually the plot grows out of the character development.

Are the suspense and surprise elements in the story true to life?

What is the underlying thesis of the novel?

MAIN STREET

Sinclair Lewis

Is Gopher Prairie a type? Do you know any town like it?

Did the heroine work out any theory of living? What do you think of her theory?

What are the elements of permanency in the book? What are its weak points? Why was it so instantly popular?

THE CATHEDRAL

Hugh Walpole

You will enjoy the vivid descriptions of Polchester Cathedral and of life in a small English cathedral town.

What furnishes the symbolic presentiment of the tragedy?

Note the picture of the Jubilee Celebration in honor of the sixtieth year of Queen Victoria's reign.

Why do you think *The Cathedral* was a best seller for so many months after its publication?

Did Brandon's popularity affect his home life?

Characterize Mrs. Brandon. Should she have asserted her rights as the wife of an Archdeacon?

What is your opinion of Canon Ronders?

MR. BRITLING SEES IT THROUGH

H. G. Wells

If you have never seen a cricket game, read this book.

Note the contrast between the quiet, sheltered life of suburban England before the war and that of the hectic, delirious war years.

Just what *did* Mr. Britling see through?

Do you feel that there is much of an autobiographical nature in the book?

Why has the novel a peculiar interest for Americans?

Does the book cause you to reconstruct any of your opinions in regard to the World War?

THE CRIME OF SYLVESTRE BONNARD

Anatole France

Explain the enigma of the title.

The atmosphere of Paris is clearly portrayed in the description of Notre Dame and the Seine.

Why have the critics marveled that this novel could have been written by a young man?

Compare the girls' boarding school and the horrible creature at its head with the school and schoolmistress in Bronte's *Jane Eyre*.

Note the exquisite style in which France writes.

A MAN FOR THE AGES

Irving Bacheller

What kind of people did Lincoln live among?

What treatment did Lincoln give the bully?

Was the third runaway slave captured?

Compare the picture of Lincoln with that Drinkwater gives in his play, *Abraham Lincoln*.

A SON OF THE MIDDLE BORDER

Hamlin Garland

How did Richard Garland's return from the war differ from the home-coming of the soldiers in the World War?

What were the outstanding family traits of the Garlands? Of the McClintocks?

If you were given your choice, which of the jobs at the threshing bee would you prefer?

Account for the popularity of the songs sung in the Garland home.

Compare this novel with Willa Cather's *My Antonia*, and with Margaret Wilson's *The Able McLaughlins*.

THE LITTLE MINISTER

James M. Barrie

What purpose did the author have in having Gavin preach the sermons against women?

Do you think it probable that Gavin would obey the Egyptian's order to throw the stone at an officer the night of the riot?

Contrast Lang Tammas and Hindry at the meeting for rain.

Would the author have secured greater dramatic effect by picturing the Egyptian as a real gypsy?

ETHAN FROME

Edith Wharton

Was Mattie Silver the victim of environment?

Had Ethan had a fair chance? In spite of this what appeals to you in his character?

Could you draw up in parallel form the contrast of character in this novel?

Note the beauty of the author's style in the passages descriptive of outdoor scenes.

Can you compare this description of New England life with any other in a novel you have previously read?

GÖSTA BERLING

Selma Lagerlöf

For vivid, fascinating descriptions of winter life in Scandinavian countries, no book of recent times excels this.

If one is interested in the myths and superstitions of the Scandinavian people, one will find a wealth of material in such incidents as the curse put upon the old captain by his wife whom he has "ousted," and in the killing of the bird with the silver bullet, stolen from the church by moonlight.

Note the quick, hurried action and the suspense in such scenes as that in which the sled full of people is attacked by wolves.

How do you feel toward Gösta?

ALICE-FOR-SHORT

William de Morgan

Under what circumstances did Alice find herself in a good home?

Was the red man with a knife a spectre?

What happened to the ring in the jug?

Who was the lady with the spots?

What was the mystery of No. 40?

MARIE DE CHAPDELAINE

Louis Hemon

In its simplicity the story is not unlike *Ethan Frome*.

Does the death of the lover in the snow storm impress you as an instance of man's powerlessness in the face of nature?

Do you like the pictures of the life of the woodsmen?

Note the energy in the characters and the patience. Are these primitive characteristics?

MR. PROHACK

Arnold Bennett

How did Mr. Prohack win his wealth?

What influence did sudden wealth have upon him, upon his wife, his daughter, his son?

Why did he desire a secretary? What part does she play in his life?

How do you think Mr. Prohack will solve the questions wealth brought him?

Compare Mr. Prohack's feeling toward wealth with that shown in *Riceyman's Steps*.

MY ANTONIA

Willa Cather

By what devices has Miss Cather made Antonia a realistic, vivid character?

Do you feel the bigness of the new country? the courage of its settlers?

Have you ever had an experience similar to Jim's experience with his first rattlesnake? (Chapter VII)

Do you know other stories of wolves similar to Pavel's story in Chapter VIII?

For other pictures of pioneer life in the Middle West read Garland's *Son of the Middle Border*, Wilson's *The Able McLaughlins*, and Hough's *The Covered Wagon*.

THE RISE OF SILAS LAPHAM

William Dean Howells

Do you like the idea of beginning the novel with a news reporter's interview of the leading character?

What do you think of Silas Lapham's honesty in his treatment of Rogers?

What was Lapham's philosophy of life?

Is your sympathy with Irene in her love tangle?

Have you known anyone like Silas?

Compare Silas Lapham with Mr. Prohack.

RED ROCK

Thomas Nelson Page

Do you feel this to be a sincere picture of the Civil War period?

How do you like the chapter headings, *e.g.*, "In which Mr. Leach Springs a Trap with Much Success"?

Have you read any other story in which there is a hidden recess behind a picture?

Are Page's negroes natural?

What are some of the superstitions you note in the novel?

What were some of the trials the Southerners had to endure during the Reconstruction days in the South?

THE PIT

Frank Norris

The Pit is the second novel in a series called The Epic of the Wheat. The others are *The Octopus* and *The Wolf*. They are not connected in any way except in their relation to the production of wheat. If you like this one, you will probably like to read the others.

Is the opening description of the lobby of a theatre realistic? of the opera?

How is the key-note of the book struck in the opening chapters?

Can you describe the Pit? How does Norris make you feel the suspense and excitement in the speculation carried on?

What picture of Chicago do you get?

THE HONORABLE PETER STERLING

Paul L. Ford

How had Peter gained his position in the political world?

In what way is he not a typical boss?

What prevented him from justifying himself when attacked?

Do you think the solution of the problem in his love affair a permanent one?

APPENDIX C

Suggestions to Guide the Pupil in a Thoughtful Reading of the Selections in the Poetry Unit

The first poems are pictures of people. Which persons do you see most clearly? Are they like any people you have ever known? Which ones do you like and which dislike? How many ways of portraying people and their characters do you discern? Do you know any real people or characters in stories whose portrait might be presented briefly and strikingly in verse? Try to express some of them in this way.

Do you like animals? Are any of your favorites among those treated in the poems in this section? If not, see if you can find a favorite animal pictured in verse in some other book of poems. What is the most striking thing in Ralph Hodgson's poem, *The Bull?*

What is the point of Agnes Lee's poem *Motherhood?* What poems to a mother or about motherhood do you know other than those in this book? Compare them all and comment on their sincerity, dignity, beauty, and fresh appropriateness. Do any of them seem commonplace? Why? Do any of them seem over-inflated with emotions? Which of all do you like best?

What do you prize most in a poem about love? Which of these poems best satisfies your requirement in this respect? What other good poems do you know which treat of this subject?

Our love for our fellow men sometimes leads us to sympathetic exposition of the lives and feelings of people less fortunate than ourselves. What poems of that sort do you find here or in other anthologies? Do you believe their pictures and messages? What idea about labor is expressed in Harold Monro's poem, *Man Carrying Bale?*

Do you think machinery or other elements of the modern industrial world fit subjects for po etic treatment? What do you think of the poems on these subjects here presented? If you are moved by some machine, industrial phenomenon, or social phase of modern industrialism, see if you can put your feelings into verse.

How do you feel in general about war? How should the subject be treated in verse, lightly, bitterly, with dignity, with stark realism, or in celebration? Which of the poems upon war in this collection best expresses your feeling? Which is the finest poem in idea and expression?

When men are tired of strife or monotony of work, or sick with the horror of war where may they turn for comfort and inspiration? What element in Nature is most inspiring to you? Find a poem which does it justice. If you fail to find one try to write one yourself.

What poems about the skylark and its song do you know? Compare with these James Stephens' *Fifteen Acres.* What is its mood? Note how this poem joins nature with music. You will find a greater subject set forth at greater length in *The Barrel-Organ* by Alfred Noyes. These poems must be read aloud to enjoy them fully. Try reading them aloud until you enjoy doing it and are satisfied with the result.

Do you know the lure of the open road? What sort of out-door life most attracts you? Find a poem that expresses your feeling about it. Note the joyous musical quality that pervades the best of these, notably those of John Masefield.

Notice David Morton's answer in the poem *Who Walks with Beauty* to the ideas of fear in the poems which precede it. Do you like better Morton's or Sara Teasdale's poem about beauty? What other poems do you know which celebrate beauty?

Two poems, Moody's *Pandora's Song* and Stephens' *What Tomas an Buile Said in a Pub,* present the sturdy heroic dignity of human life. Which do you like better? Why?

Notice the similarity of subject and diversity of poetic treatment between *Handfuls* by Carl Sandburg and *The Loom of Years* by Alfred Noyes. Notice the relation of the metrical construction of *The Loom of Years* to its idea. How would you put its theme briefly in your own words?

Out of your contact with contemporary verse have you discovered a favorite poet for yourself? If so, what does he write about most? What kind of language does he use and what kinds of poetic rhythms?

Can you detect similarities and differences between the trend of modern poetry and that of earlier days?

APPENDIX D

Suggestions to Guide the Pupil in a Thoughtful Reading of the Selections in the Essay Unit

ON BEING WHERE YOU BELONG

David Grayson

Ask some of your grown-up friends if they agree with Grayson in his theory of contentment.

What is that theory?

Read other essays in his books—*Adventures in Friendship* and *The Friendly Road.*

NURMI BREAKS A RECORD

Robert Littell

Have you read any other articles about Nurmi?

Who is your favorite athlete?

Have you ever seen in action the holder of a world's record?

How does the author create and maintain suspense?

Can you describe some contest in your school in the style of this article?

Do you know the national anthem of Finland?

FEAR

Frank Jewett Mather, Jr.

Does Mather give you a new conception of fear?

Can you cite other examples which he might have used to illustrate his points?

Do you remember hearing stories of the bravery of the passengers and sailors when the Titanic and the Lusitania sank?

For an analysis of the sensation of fear, read Poe's story—*The Descent into a Maelstrom.*

THE EVOLUTION OF THE GENTLEMAN

Samuel McChord Crothers

The essay is selected from a book called *The Gentle Reader.* You will be interested in the author's explanation of the choice of title —"Once upon a time, that is to say a generation or two ago, he was very highly esteemed. To him books were dedicated, with long rambling prefaces and with episodes which were their own excuse for being. In the very middle of the story, the writer would stop with a word of apology or explanation addressed to the Gentle Reader, or at least with a nod or a wink. No matter if the fate of the hero be in suspense or the plot be inextricably involved."

Are you familiar with the literature through which Crothers traces the evolution of the gentleman—Plutarch's Lives, the Story of Sigfried, the Story of Arthur, and the Story of Charlemagne?

What common quality do you see in the gentlemen discussed?

Note the references to the autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini. Add this book to those on your library list.

A BOY'S BOOK RAMBLES

Theodore Roosevelt

Do you feel that Theodore Roosevelt is at all like his illustrious father?

Compare Roosevelt's experience with books with that of W. D. Howells which he relates in *My Literary Passions.*

What book stands out in your memory of your childhood reading?

Can you account for its strong impression?

Can you name another book which, like *Pilgrim's Progress,* is "read by the child with one viewpoint, and later on by that same child when grown up, with an entirely different viewpoint?"

CHINA THE ETERNAL

Pearl S. Buck

If you like the intimate tone of this sketch, you will enjoy a letter which relates an experience with Chinese bandits—The Atlantic Monthly, November 1923.

What is the "menace" to Chinese civilization of which Miss Buck speaks?

Your next reading should be Beebe's *Jungle Beach.*

A JUNGLE BEACH

WILLIAM BEEBE

Just what did Roosevelt mean in his statement quoted by Beebe "that he would rather perceive things from the point of view of a field-mouse, than be a human being and merely see them."

How are you made to feel the spirit and the color of the jungle?

Note the unusual description of the insect life about the fallen tree.

Look up the story of Antaeus in Hawthorne's *Twice Told Tales.*

Do you know Mowgli? If not, read Kipling's *Jungle Book.*

Other stories to read in connection with this are Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and W. H. Hudson's *Far Away and Long Ago.*

THE LIBERATION OF A PEOPLE'S VITAL ENERGIES

WOODROW WILSON

Has the ideal of freedom in America grown since the founding of the country?

Do you agree with Wilson in his definition of liberty?

Note how very clear Wilson makes himself. Is this due to selection of words or to sentence and paragraph organization?

APPENDIX E

SUGGESTIONS TO GUIDE THE PUPIL IN A THOUGHTFUL READING OF THE PLAYS IN THE DRAMA UNIT

A NIGHT AT AN INN

LORD DUNSANY

What has happened before the play begins? How do we find it out?

What most holds your interest in the play?

What emotional response does the play stir in you? By what means?

THE LORD'S PRAYER

FRANÇOIS COPPÉE

By what means is the character of Mademoiselle Rose revealed? What do you think is the underlying cause of her decision?

In what besides character are you greatly interested in this play? Of the two elements which remains greater after you have finished reading it?

THE MAKER OF DREAMS

OLIPHANT DOWNS

How is this play like *The Coming of Fair Annie?* How different?

Is it *literally* true to life? Figuratively so?

If you like this kind of play look in other collections for more plays about Pierrot, Pierrette, Columbine, and Harlequin.

You will find interesting facts about the history of these characters in reference works under the title of Commedia del'Arte.

PEGGY

HAROLD WILLIAMSON

What is the problem—the essential conflict—in the play?

Do you like its solution?

Are the problem and the solution true to life, even outside the Carolinas?

Which of the characters seems most real and vivid as an individuality?

Which is least so? Why?

THE COMING OF FAIR ANNIE

GRAHAM PRICE

Does the style of the dialogue locate the time and place of the play?

What other purpose does it serve in addition to unfolding the story?

How clearly do you visualize the persons and understand their characters?

Do any of them seem to be types rather than individuals?

What is the emotional tone of the play?

How is it produced and sustained?

DUST OF THE ROAD

Kenneth Sawyer Goodman

In this play is your chief interest in character, incident, or meaning?

Through whose lines is the meaning of the play principally expressed?

What atmosphere permeates the play? How is it produced?

Do you find any expressions of fine poetic imagery?

Do you note anything peculiarly appropriate about the names of the leading characters?

How much of the play is devoted to exposition of the antecedent situation?

Where does the rising action of the play begin?

Where is the climax?

What final incident in the dénouement assures us of the regeneration of Peter Steele and his wife?

Where is there symbolism in the play?

CYRANO DE BERGERAC

Edmond Rostand

Act I

Can you picture the opening scene? It will be interesting to consult an encyclopedia, or a history of drama or of French literature for description of the theatre in the seventeenth century. What conditions do you notice in this opening scene that are vastly different from our modern customs in the theatre?

What seems to have been the characteristics of French gentlemen of fashion in the seventeenth century? By what means are the leading characters of the play introduced before we meet them? Is the exposition in the first act devoted chiefly to character or to situation?

The Cardinal referred to is Richelieu. Can you name other plays or stories in which he is a figure?

What is your first impression of Cyrano? Of Christian? Where does the conflict of the play become evident?

Act II

What two arts in which the French people have prided themselves upon their skill and good taste are represented in the settings of acts one and two? Do you like Ragueneau? Why?

At what point does a new and significant complication enter into the plot? Are you surprised at Cyrano's treatment of Christian? Does this change in any way your opinion of his character?

Act III

What happens to the plot of the play in this act? Characterize de Guiche, Roxane, and Christian. Sum up the elements of Cyrano's character that have been displayed so far. What is the most brilliant scene in the play up to this point?

Act IV

Is Cyrano's conduct in this act consistent with his character? How? Is Roxane's adventure hard to believe? Can you picture her? Is she very unlike modern girls? Sum up her characteristics. What further development in the story do you expect after the death of Christian?

Act V

Can you picture the setting of this act? Do you see how it can be made to further the mood of the act? Is the old Cyrano of the grand gesture still with us? In the French script of the play his last words are "mon panache" which translates literally as "my plume." How is this a key to his character?

General Questions

In this play does plot, character, or theme predominate? Has the play a moral theme? Does it stimulate in you admiration or dislike for any traits of human character?

In what ways is the play romantic? In the French it is written in rhyming couplets. Should you like that in a translation? Can you trace out the interweaving of humor and pathos? Do you like "the way it comes out"? Comment on other possible endings.

Many French people like to think of Cyrano as a symbol of their nation. Can you see why? Comment on the idea.

The play has been very popular with English and American audiences as well as with the French. Can you see why? What scenes are good for enactment in the classroom or on the school stage?

JUAREZ AND MAXIMILIAN

Franz Werfel

First Picture

What differences in structure from that common to most drama do you notice at once in this play? Another historical play somewhat similar in structure to this is *Abraham Lincoln* by John Drinkwater. Do you see any advantage in this use of not very closely connected episodes to create a picture of a character? Does this method destroy the continuity of the story?

How does the first picture establish the time of the action for you? Do you think it strange Juarez is not brought upon the stage here? Is there any gain in dramatic effectiveness in his non-appearance? Does the first picture explain the situation? Does any one of the characters stand out significantly?

Second Picture

What is your first impression of Maximilian? Do you like him? What is your impression of Lopez? of Herzfield, Dr. Basch, Charlotte?

Third Picture

What is added in this picture to your impression of the character of Maximilian? Characterize Labastida; Bazaine.

Fourth Picture

Can you find anything about Napoleon III in your modern histories or in the encyclopedia? What was his connection with Maximilian's attempt to establish an empire in Mexico? Are Bazaine and Pierron good ambassadors for him? Do you see any resemblance between Maximilian and any familiar heroes in plays of Shakespeare?

Fifth Picture

Compare the character of Empress Charlotte with that of Lady Macbeth. What characteristics of Maximilian seem to be dominant in this picture?

Sixth Picture

What is the effect of getting back to the Juarists' territory in this picture? How does it contribute to the progress of the story? To character?

Seventh Picture

What changes have taken place in Maximilian? How does Lopez impress you now? What new character is announced?

Eighth Picture

How do you account for Pierron's action? It may be interesting to compare Maximilian's dejected confession of failure to Macbeth's lines beginning "I have fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf,—".

What do you think of the Emperor's response to Diaz?

Ninth Picture

What is the purpose of the conversation in the first part of this picture? of the introduction of Princess Salm at this point?

Tenth Picture

Are you surprised by the events of this scene? What purpose is served by reading the newspaper?

Eleventh Picture

Is this scene necessary to the story? What purpose does it serve?

Twelfth Picture

What is the predominant dramatic element of this scene—character, incident, mood, or theme? Comment on Maximilian's speeches. What is the dramatic effect of the report of the death of the Empress? Was it a true report? Comment on the dramatic value of the cries of the sentries.

Thirteenth Picture

What object is served by the epilogue? Would the play have been complete and as good without it?

General Questions

The play is primarily a study of the Emperor Maximilian's character. Can you trace its elements through all the pictures in his acts and speeches and in the comments made about him by other persons in the play? Did anyone understand him? Did he know himself? Trace the causes of his failure. Could he have won? Where in the play does the tide of affairs seem to turn definitely against

him? Are there enough heroic or admirable traits in his character to make his failure and death pitiful or tragic? Is he a hero in the play?

What other characters are outstanding? Describe some of them. What characters serve chiefly to support sympathy for Maximilian?

What is the effect of not once seeing Juarez on the stage? Would the play have been bettered by his appearance?

Are there any good pieces of thought in the lines? Do you see any significance to the divisions into three phases and an epilogue? What are the most dramatic scenes in the play?

Does the play suggest comparison in any way with the present situation in Mexico? It will be interesting to look up the historical background of the drama.

APPENDIX F

Suggestions to Guide the Pupil in a Thoughtful Study of the Magazine

The Outlook, The Outlook Co., New York.
The New Republic, The New Republic Co., New York.
Harper's Magazine, Harper and Brothers, New York.
The Bookman, Bookman Publishing Co., New York.
Scribner's Magazine, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.
The American Review of Reviews, The Review of Reviews Corp., New York
The Atlantic Monthly, The Atlantic Monthly Co., New York.
The Literary Digest, Funk and Wagnalls Co., New York.
The Century Magazine, The Century Co., New York.
The World's Work, Doubleday - Doran Co., Garden City, N. Y.
The London Mercury, The International News Co., N. Y.
The Living Age, The Living Age Co., Boston, Mass.
The Ladies' Home Journal, The Curtis Publishing Co., Philadelphia, Pa.
The Saturday Evening Post, The Curtis Publishing Co., Philadelphia, Pa.
The Woman's Home Companion, The Crowell Publishing Co., Springfield, Ohio.
Good Housekeeping, International Magazine, Inc., N. Y.
The American Magazine, The Crowell Publishing Co., Springfield, Ohio.
The Pictorial Review, The Pictorial Review Co., N. Y.

OUTLINE FOR MAGAZINE STUDY

A. Physical Features.

1. Is the cover artistic in its color and composition?
2. Is the quality of the paper in the magazine good?
3. Do you like the print?
4. Do you like the size of the magazine—Is it convenient to hold?
5. Are there illustrations? Discuss the type and quality of these.
6. How does the number of pages of advertising compare with the number of pages of literary material?

B. Subject Matter.

1. What is the proportion of various types of literature?
2. Analyze each type.
   a. What is the favorite kind of story? Foreign or domestic settings?
   b. General trend of essays?
   c. What kind of poetry?
   d. Is there any drama?
3. From the above analysis, how would you classify the magazine? Literary, critical, technical, political, etc.
4. Is there much literary criticism?
5. Are there cartoons? Analyze them. Other humorous features?
6. Are the advertisements such as would appeal to a certain kind of public? Is it the same public to which the literary part of the magazine appeals?

7. Are the contributors people who are well-known in their various fields? Do the same contributors appear year after year? Do you know any books they have published?

C. The Management.

1. Who is the publisher?
2. Who is the editor?
3. Are there well-known people on the staff?
4. What is the editorial policy as you can see it in the magazine?
5. Where is the magazine published?
6. What is its circulation?

D. General Estimate.

Make a summarizing statement of your judgment of the magazine.

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rime, white
hoar frost
flout - to mock or
insult
succours, help, or relief
lyre - carlot - country men
- corn harvest